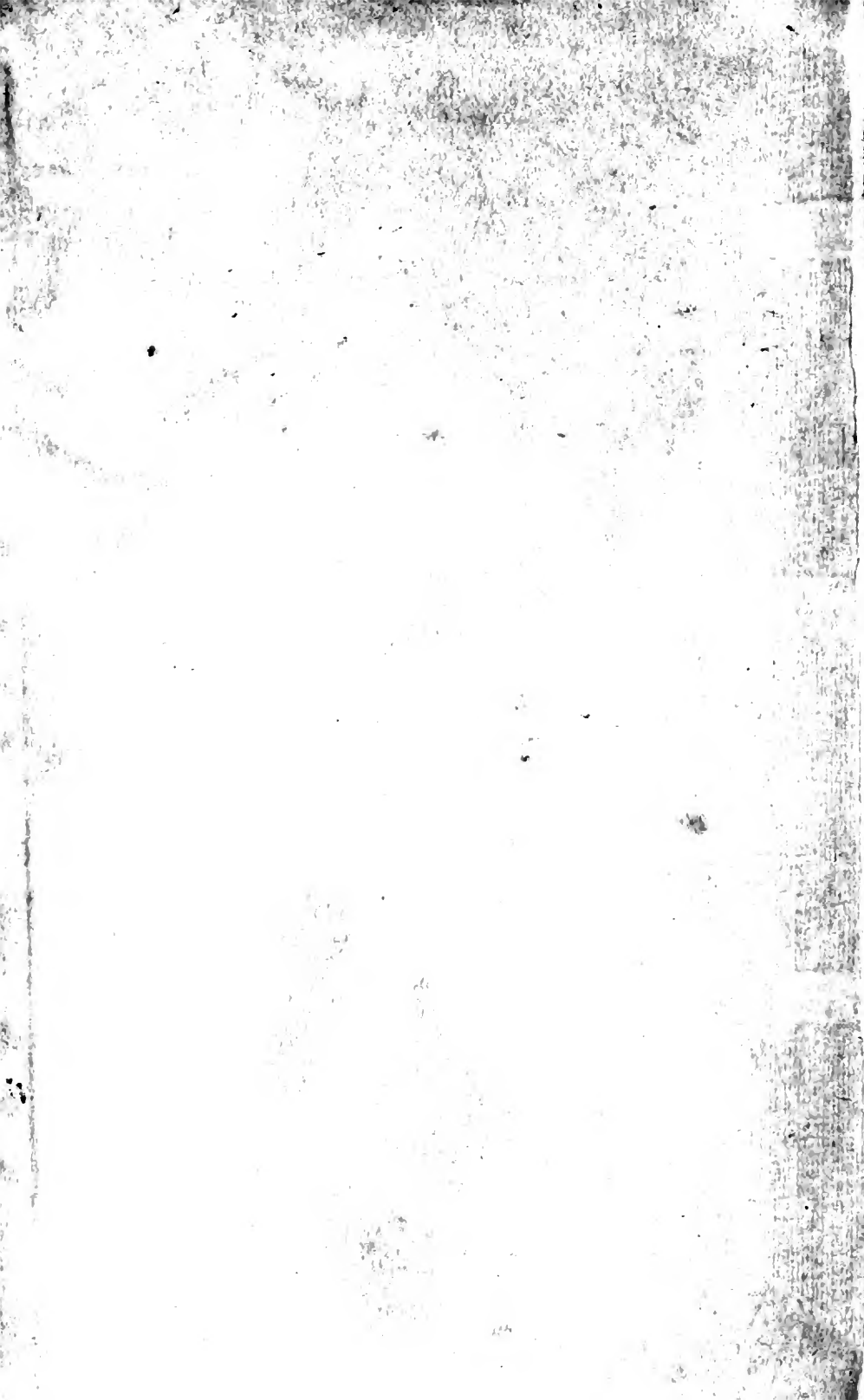


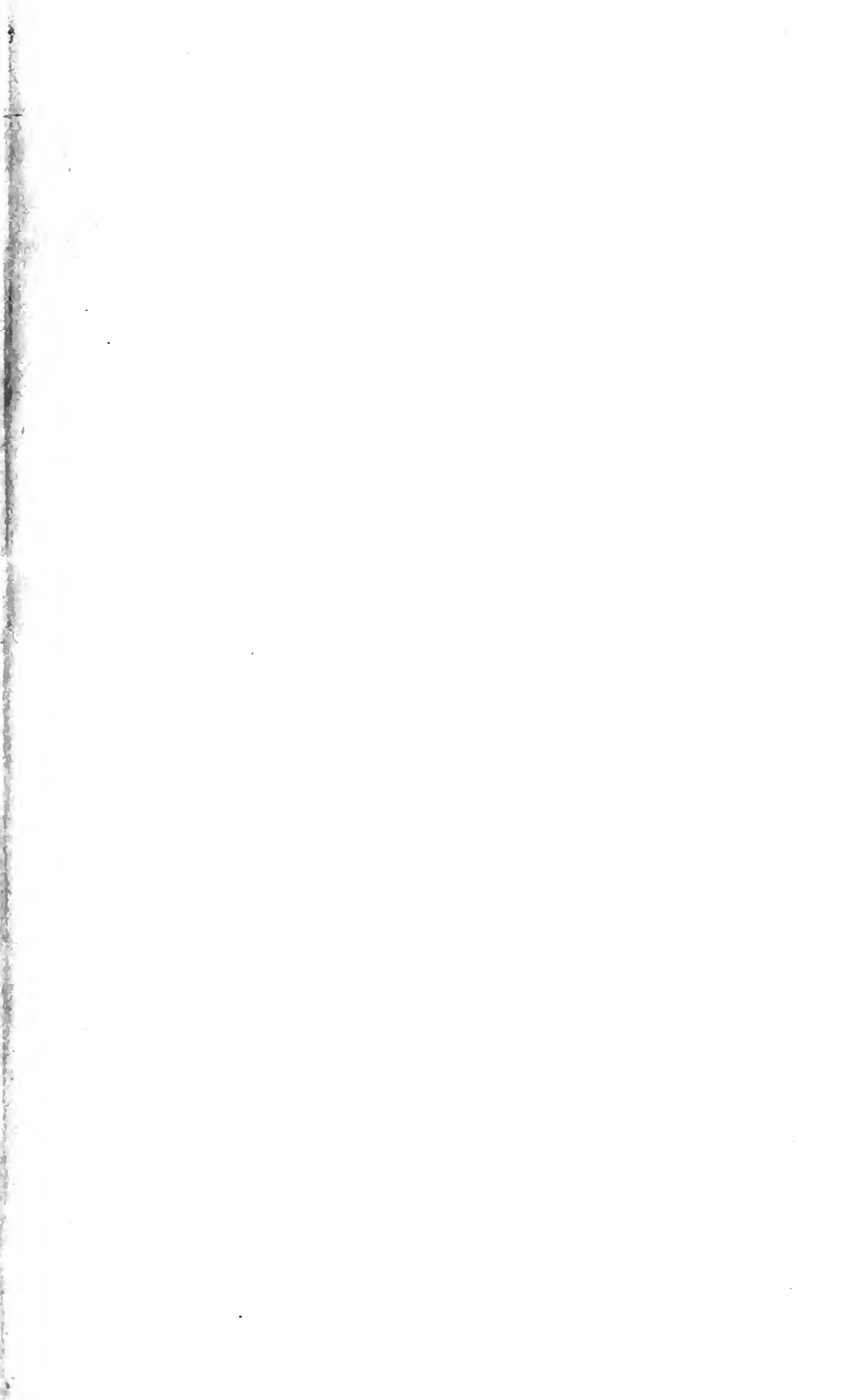
GAMBETTA

Life and Letters



P. B. GHEUSI





GAMBETTA
LIFE AND LETTERS



Photo. Carjat

GAMBETTA in 1870

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GAMBETTA

LIFE AND LETTERS

ierre BY
P. B. GHEUSI

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION BY
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TRANSLATOR OF "THE HEART OF GAMBETTA"

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PREFACE

CALUMNY has ever been the guerdon of success ; it is the pillory in which every man who has risen from mediocrity and has won fame and perhaps fortune for himself must stand and wait patiently until envy and party-spirit have exhausted their venom, and history can do justice to their victim. And this is especially true in France, where politics play a very important part, where the most insignificant event may be magnified into an atrocious crime, where religious intolerance still has much to answer for, where Prejudice stumbles along the rugged road of Reality, veiling her eyes and obstinately refusing to see the finger-post pointing towards the Land of Better Things.

In M. P. B. Gheusi's interesting work, "*Gambetta par Gambetta*," published in Paris, April, 1909, which I now have the honour to translate, we learn the truth concerning two important events in the great patriot's life, two *accidents* so cleverly mangled and distorted by slander that his enemies (and many of his admirers, too) are unaware of the truth, and believe them to have been anything but accidents. How often have I not heard people deplore Gambetta's mad act of spite in blinding himself in the right eye because his father would not take him away from the little seminary at Cahors, kept

by priests, towards whom, it was said, Gambetta had already begun to show animosity! We doubt whether such a little monster would have become the great-hearted Gambetta of the National Defence, the defender of the leaders of the Commune, the dutiful, affectionate son whose letters in their childlike deference to his parents' wishes are a living proof of the sacred tie of affection which exists between parent and child in France. Does not Gambetta, at that time twenty-one years of age, tell us in one of his letters that he did not dare to sign a newspaper article with his own name because he had not obtained his father's consent? But it is Mme. Léonie Léon who has suffered most at the hands of Anastasie, the French equivalent for Mrs. Grundy. Feminine spite accuses her of ruining Gambetta's career, of exploiting him, of trying to persuade him to make a *coup d'état* on his own account, and finally of murdering him in a fit of jealousy. M. Gheusi answers all these accusations.

In one of Gambetta's most touching letters, written when he was studying in Paris, and trying to keep himself in good health and spirits on the magnificent sum of tenpence a day, we find one sentence, a cry of loneliness, an echo of that feeling voiced by Goethe in the exquisite lines—

“ Wer nie sein Brod mit Thränen ass,
Wer nie die kummervollen Nächte
Auf seinem Bette weinend sass,
Der kennt euch nicht, ihr himmlischen Mächte.”

The young student writes: “It is not good for man to be alone.” Truly those first years of exile in Paris, before the good Aunt Tata came to keep house for her dear *Leïon*, as she called him, must have been very hard

to bear. And yet who knows whether those very hardships, which have marked the *début* of many a brilliant career, were not the very best thing for the headstrong young Southerner. It was probably because he had had to purchase his knowledge and experience at the cost of such sacrifices that he realised the value of education, which he ever advocated as the one thing needful, that education of the masses, of the people, which other thinkers than Gambetta hold to be the panacea for all social evils. And in this he did not mean that the capital alone was to have the monopoly of popular education; he wished the provinces to share in these advantages. "No!" said he; "No! no! France is not divided into two portions, city and country; there is but one France, the France which belongs to the workers, the toilers who strive to insure peace to her, to make her free and prosperous, both at home and abroad."

Two women, Mme. Léonie Léon and Mme. Juliette Adam, claim to have tamed the *lion amoureux* and taught him how to behave like a gentleman. The former was for ten years his faithful companion; his letters prove to us that in her he found encouragement before the battle and sweet consolation after he had sacrificed his all and received worse than nothing—ingratitude—in return. And yet we cannot help thinking that his position must have suffered from being unable to take her into society—that respectable, middle-class society with its rigid code of morals.

M. Henri Thurat, in his valuable work, "The Life of Gambetta," states that Mme. Juliette Adam, whose *salon* has often been termed a *bureau politique*, inspired the young advocate with confidence in the future and in his own powers. But we must here observe that he

himself, while still a mere boy, realised that he was destined to be some one, to make a mark in the world.

Francisque Sarcey tells us that Gambetta, at the age of twenty-two, was so well aware of his own talents that he used to say, "I, with my brain, am capable of leading France!" That Gambetta was not always as careful of his personal appearance as he ought to have been is proved by the fact that when, while in Maître Lachaud's office, he asked to be admitted to the *magistrature assise*, his petition was returned to him with these words: "Impossible, on account of slovenly appearance."

Gambetta's first public success dated from November 14, 1868, when he astonished the legal profession by his speech made in the famous *Procès Baudin*. On this occasion his Southern temperament stood him in good stead. When the president tried to contradict him he refused to be silenced. All efforts to stop this *mitrail-leuse de l'éloquence* were useless. He spoke so rapidly that the reporters smashed all their pencils in their endeavours to follow him, and were finally obliged to trust to their memory and to sit still listening to him.

Gambetta spared neither mind nor body in his endeavours to save his country: the events of 1870-71 aged him before his time. M. Thurat speaks of him as being worn out, exhausted by his manifold duties. And indeed the portrait taken by Carjat in 1870 makes him look more like a man of fifty years of age than a young man of thirty-two.

When Gambetta, in reply to Bismarck's assertion that he had determined to take Paris at all cost, promised to do everything which lay in his power to prevent him doing so, he did not hesitate to risk his life in a balloon in order to reach Tours, and from there to direct the

movements of the Committee for the National Defence. For forty-eight hours he and M. de Freycinet were shut up together discussing what ought to be done. Gambetta, remembering his old friendship with Garibaldi, besought the latter to come to the aid of France. For four months he scarcely allowed himself time to eat or to sleep. Thanks to his efforts, the Morgan loan, which liberated France from the clutches of the invader by the payment of five thousand million francs, became an accomplished fact.

Of the terrible days of the Commune few Frenchmen even now care to speak. War in its most horrible form—civil war—was raging. France was slaughtering her own progeny. Cruel reprisals were frequent on both sides. Who could wonder that the people, the lower classes, from whose ranks the victims of war are always drawn, should revolt against all control and, having suffered so terribly, should wish to try and rule themselves? In the discussion concerning the fate of the fomenters of the Commune, Gambetta made one of his most eloquent speeches, the result of which was that a vote of amnesty was passed in their favour.

U. S.
Feb. 11
M. Charles Laurent deplores the fact that when it was decided that the *Assemblée nationale* was to convene on January 31, 1871, Gambetta, not wishing to entrust to the same hands which had caused the war of 1870-71 the care of signing peace in the name of France, issued a decree declaring that the former servitors of the Empire would be ineligible. But Gambetta was perfectly justified in acting thus. The shameful scenes of servility in its lowest form, as enacted at the court of Louis XVIII., when Napoleon's faithful servitors and several of the most bloodthirsty Republicans of '93 flocked to swear undying

fealty to the new tenant of the Tuileries, should constitute a salutary lesson to the politician.

Mlle. Georgette Ducrest, for some time the friend and *protégée* of the Empress Joséphine, tells us in her Memoirs how the same faces were seen in the corridors of the palace of the Tuileries both before and after Napoleon's downfall—the colour of the livery alone had changed.

To Gambetta's initiative France owes compulsory military duty, the term of which was at first limited to three years; it has now been considerably reduced.

When, on November 18, 1881, he was obliged to take the management of the country's affairs into his own hands and form a Cabinet, he met with nothing but resistance and opposition. Two months later the question of the *scrutin de liste*,* which he wished to force upon the Chamber, occasioned his downfall.

The perusal of the letters contained in this volume leaves a strange feeling of sadness. We realise that Gambetta's life was one long struggle: in his youth it was the struggle against poverty—almost starvation—the endeavour to look respectable and to feed and educate himself upon the smallest sum possible; then as he grew older it was the struggle against increasing ill-health—partly caused, it is true, by his own imprudence, but much aggravated by overwork and worry. If ever any man gave his all without counting the loss and without stint, that man was Gambetta.

And when, after his death, his father was besought to allow the great patriot's body to be buried in Paris, in

* *Scrutin de liste*: balloting for a list of persons; when the tickets given in contain a list of the candidates deemed (by the voters) fit for office.

the capital of his beloved France, the old man, with the obstinacy which had always marked his treatment of his gifted son, sent a curt telegram:—

“You had him while he was alive ; now that he is dead, worn out by your politics, I wish to have him. He shall rest in the little cemetery of Nice, whither his mother preceded him. I do not wish his grave to be desecrated in the hereafter.”

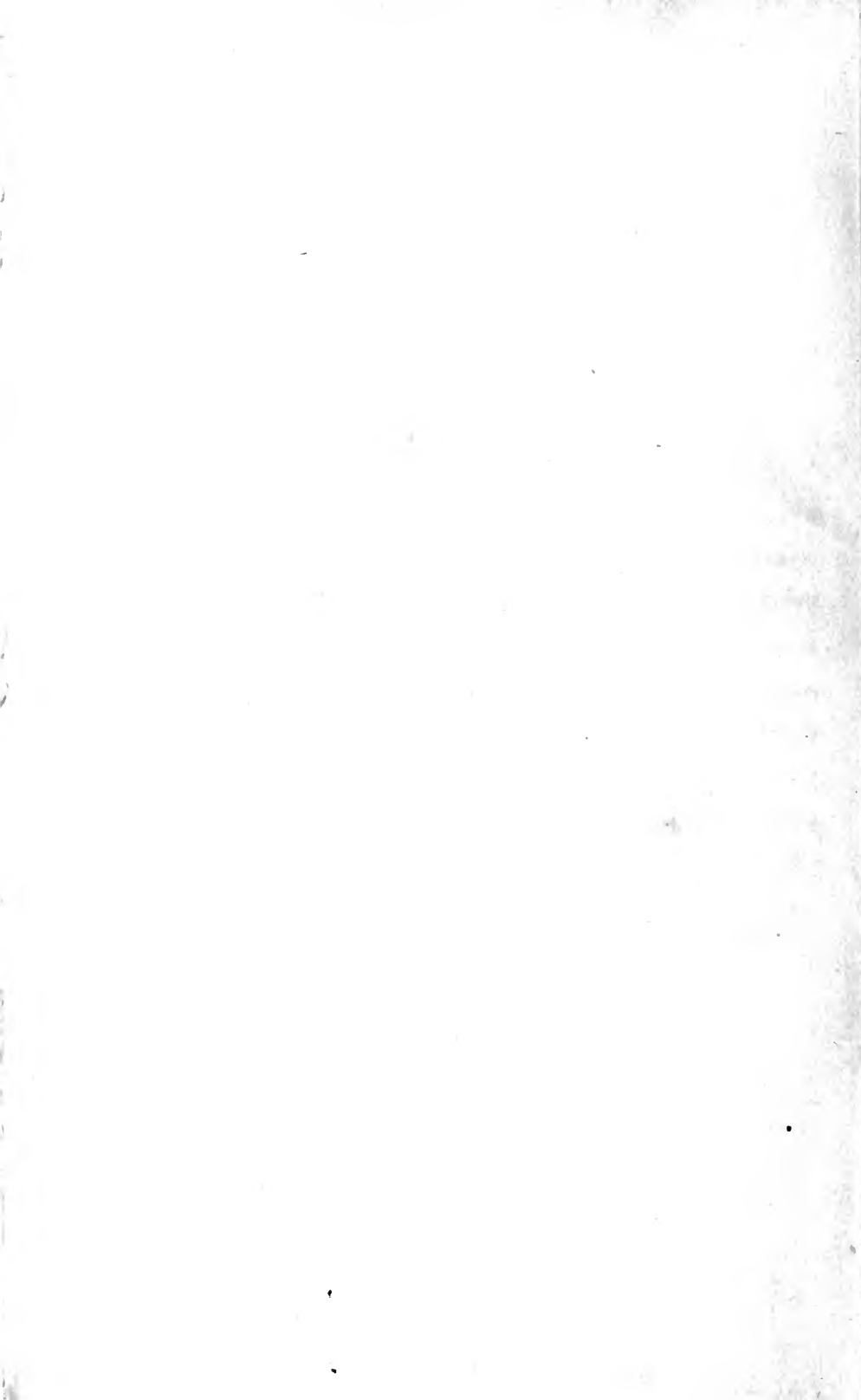
VIOLETTE M. MONTAGU.

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GAMBETTA

I

THE CHILDHOOD OF GAMBETTA

GAMBETTA's ancestors on his father's side originally came from a little village called Celle-Ligure, situated at the mouth of the Chiage on the Riviera di Ligura, two leagues north-east of Savona. The tribune's grandfather and his numerous relatives became French subjects when the French Empire overflowed its natural boundaries. The Gambettas of Celle-Ligure, who, like all the dwellers along this coast, which gave navigators to the world long before it became the cradle of Christopher Columbus, had been sailors from father to son, had from time immemorial owned coasting-vessels sailing from port to port along the seaboard, which had ever possessed great attractions for the Phœnician traders, and which, all too often, had endured invasion at the hands of Barbary pirates.

The last descendants of the Latin Ligurians used small tartans to convey to the land of their choice the produce of the Riviera di Genova; this produce, which consisted of refined oil, macaroni, and vermicelli, also included the

coarse pottery which Italiote * and Provençal sailors for long centuries bartered along the shores of the Mediterranean, from the plains of the Troad (where archæologists still sometimes find shards of unfamiliar form and colour and wonder what hands made them) to the ocean ports of Morocco and Portugal.

Gambetta's grandfather brought merchandise to Cette from every corner of the Genoese Corniche. From Cette he used to visit Toulouse and Bordeaux, ascending the canal of Languedoc and exploring the long winding banks and towing-paths of the Garonne in search of new markets. It was thus that in 1818 Baptiste Gambetta reached Cahors with his stock of merchandise. The peaceful capital of le Quercy pleased him; in fact, it accorded such a friendly reception to the Ligurian, who did not wish to dwell any longer on the shores of the Gulf of Lyons, in whose treacherous waters his cousin Nicole's boats had just been engulfed, that he took up his abode at Cahors with his wife, Benedetta Galleano, and his three sons, Paul, Michel, and Joseph.

His Italian relations, the Collarera and Gheusi families, established themselves at Toulouse, from which town their vessels sailed to and fro during forty years between the Etang de Thau† and the Bazacle of Toulouse.

When I was still a child I used to see the last remaining barges, now old and useless, rotting in a corner of the Port-Garaud or slumbering in the grassy haven of the Allée-des-Demoiselles.

* *Italiotes*: persons of Greek birth living in Italy; inhabitants of Magna Græcia.

† The *palus Taphros* or *Taurus* of olden times, a huge salt lake about ten miles long, situated in the department of le Hérault.

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Baptiste Gambetta opened an unpretentious little shop for the sale of pottery and groceries in the market-square at Cahors ; but he never failed to spend a few weeks from time to time at his birthplace, where he still kept some small premises, a sort of warehouse, which he ultimately turned into a retreat for his old age. His children accompanied him on these expeditions ; but as they had already become much more attached to le Quercy than to the Genoese Riviera, their visits grew less frequent. The father, however, insisted on his youngest son, Joseph (born September 24, 1814), making, in obedience to an old family custom, what they called in those days "the young mariner's voyage round the world." In 1824, the boy, then ten years of age, hired himself as cabin-boy on board one of the sailing vessels built in the celebrated dockyards of the Riviera. In this way he was able to see Chili ; and we cannot help feeling strangely moved when we learn that Garibaldi was among the officers of the vessel in which Léon Gambetta's father sailed, and that the Abbé Mastai, who later became Pope Pius IX., was one of the passengers. Had this vessel been wrecked, the fate of the Old World might have been slightly changed !

When Baptiste Gambetta felt himself growing old, he went back to Italy, taking his eldest son Paul with him. The two younger sons, Michel and Joseph, succeeded to their father's business at Cahors, where they set up together in the rue du Lycée. As soon as their business began to prosper they separated and each set up on his own account. On July 25, 1837, Joseph married Marie-Magdeleine-Orazie Massabie, the daughter of a chemist, who originally came from Molières, in the department of Tarn-et-Garonne. He then opened a shop on the place

de la Cathédrale, in the Maison Bessières, at the sign of the "Bazar Génois."

Jean-Baptiste Gambetta died at Celle-Ligure, his native village, in 1841, after having made his will, September 17th, in the presence of Riagio Pescetto, his notary. He left three sons and two daughters—Paul, Michel, and Joseph; Véronique, who married Antoine Molinari, and Thérèse, who married Sebastien Ghezzi, both natives of Celle-Ligure. Paul and Thérèse left large families, who now own valuable real estate in the market town.

At Cahors, Michel, having left Joseph, made a speciality of the sale of pottery. His brother, although much respected for his honesty and integrity, was not exactly a good man of business; he did not strike his neighbours as being either very intelligent or very prudent. His son, as we shall see by his letters, was devoted to him; but it would seem as if he had inherited his charming and affectionate disposition from his mother.

Léon Gambetta was born April 2, 1838, at eight o'clock in the evening, in a room situated on the second floor of a house in the rue du Lycée. His certificate of birth is drawn up in the following terms:—

"April 3, 1838, at one o'clock in the evening, certificate of the birth of Léon-Michel, of male sex, born *yesterday*, at eight o'clock at night, son of Joseph-Nicolas Gambetta, merchant, aged twenty-four years, and of Magdeleine Massabie, aged twenty-three years, married, residing at Cahors, place Royale; this declaration was made by the midwife, Catherine Bouyssou, who presented the child in person.

"Witnesses: Pierre Vallet, military pensioner, aged

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forty-six years, and Martin Combelle, ex-soldier, aged thirty-six years, residing in this town; signed and witnessed according to the law by us, Jean-Michel-Louis-Auguste Berton, deputy mayor for the commune of Cahors.

“Signed by: Joseph Gambetta, father, Catherine Bouyssou, Vallet, Combelle, and Berton, deputy mayor.”

In order to witness this certificate of birth, the relations called into the vestibule of the Town Hall two *sergents-de-ville*, the first persons whom they happened to find. Later, when the young orator's sudden and unexpected celebrity gave rise to all sorts of fanciful legends, when busybodies were endeavouring to prove in German newspapers that he was very closely related to Napoleon III., so that they might explain his violent attacks against the Empire and the Emperor, his neighbours at Cahors were appealed to in order to confirm certain extraordinary reports concerning his birth. The only anecdote, partly authentic, which his first biographers were able to discover and to prove, relates an adventure which his mother had with a somnambulist. There is always a *voyante* hovering round the cradle of future celebrities in the South and the East; they are the good fairies and the genii of modern credulity. She who, even before his birth, prophesied that Gambetta would become a great man, was well known to many a female inhabitant of Cahors, and her “extra lucid” clairvoyance was much lauded. One of Gambetta's intimate friends relates the wonderful anecdote; it is not without interest.

“In September, 1837,” writes this friend, “a certain fortune-teller lived at Cahors, where she was esteemed by the prefect, M. B. de la C. She called herself by the

modest name of Nanette, but every one knew her as the 'belle Nivernaise.' The whole countryside rang with the fame of her marvellous facility for predicting the future, and people came to consult her from miles round. One day some young married women, whose curiosity had been greatly aroused, determined to have their fortunes told by the fashionable sibyl. In order to see if the fortune-teller was really gifted with second sight they concocted an ingenious plan: Joseph Gambetta's young wife, at that time *enceinte*, took off her wedding-ring and asked with a blush if she was likely to marry soon. But it was not such an easy matter to deceive Nanette. She replied to her visitor that she need not hide her wedding-ring and assured her that, before six months had elapsed, she would have a son who would become celebrated and that she would also have a daughter some little time afterwards. . . ."

This prediction came true. Before Léon's birth, Joseph Gambetta had had another child, a son, who did not live. He then had a daughter, Benedetta, who later married an engineer, M. Jouinot, who died in 1871, during the siege of Paris. From this marriage was born Léon Jouinot-Gambetta, now *chef d'escadrons de cavalerie* at Marseilles. In 1876 Léon Gambetta's sister subsequently married one of her compatriots, M. Alexandre Lérís, *inspecteur du service des finances*, by whom she had two sons.

At four years of age the little Gambetta was sent to a school kept by the Pères du Sacré-Cœur de Picpus in the "Petits-Carmes." His first teachers there were Father Tussier, who in 1871 was shot by the Paris Commune, and Father Maigret, who died in one of the Oceanic archipelagos. It was at the "Petits-Carmes"

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at Cahors that Gambetta learnt to read. The first few years of his life were uneventful. When he was eight years of age he nearly died of peritonitis, which, having been neglected, caused a stricture of the intestine. The *post-mortem* examination at Les Jardies showed that this was one of the principal causes of his death.

In 1847 Joseph Gambetta sent his son to the little seminary of Montfaucon, near the village of Labastide-Murat, the birthplace of the King of Naples. As Gambetta's father was purveyor to this establishment, the Abbé Bonhomme, the Father Superior of the seminary, allowed his son to be educated there on very reduced terms.

Already, at nine years of age, Gambetta found it easier to talk than to write: his recitations, improvisations, and harangues to his school-fellows promised well for his future career as a politician; his letters, on the other hand, are the letters of an affectionate child and a very mediocre scholar.

On January 20, 1848, a note written by him to his father concludes with a very precocious republican cry: "Long live Cavagnac! (*sic*). Down with Bonaparte!"

On December 20th the ten-year-old orator wishes his parents a happy new year, and tells them what he thinks of the future Emperor, whom he already criticises severely.

"It seems that Napoleon has been elected, although he is as stupid as an ostrich; and, to hear him speak, one would think he was a Prussian, a Hottentot, or an Hungarian. And even supposing any one in the Chamber [the Chamber, in this child's opinion, was already the most important place in the whole country] could understand all those languages, he would find it

difficult to understand two words of any of Napoleon's speeches!"

Léon, who was wild and headstrong, and who never got many good marks for good conduct, was remarkable for some qualities which his first schoolmaster, the Abbé Auferin, later acknowledged in a kind letter:—

"He worked easily, and at ten years of age was more intelligent than most boys of that age; so he was able, though giving less time to his studies and taking less pains when he did study, to do more than his school-fellows. He excelled in history, Latin, and composition. His keen, quick, and observant mind helped him to notice anything odd or ludicrous in his school-fellows' looks or behaviour, which he would then imitate in a very telling manner. Although he was mischievous and thoughtless, he was not spiteful; he was really a very kind-hearted boy; he did not wish to wound his comrades' feelings, but only to make them laugh."

At the last quarterly examination of the eighth form, the pupil Gambetta was reprimanded by the Father Superior: he was careless about his personal appearance; his conduct was fairly good, but he was still very thoughtless; he was often lacking in application; his exercise books were dirty and untidy; there were several "fairs" and one "very good," only one, however, for history. He won a first prize for reading and a mention for history. He always showed more talent in relating by word of mouth what he had learnt from his professors than in putting the knowledge so gleaned in black and white!

While in the seventh form (1848-1849) Léon made marked progress; he became more regular in his attendance and more painstaking; he won first prizes for history

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and geography, and he was very highly mentioned for his Latin composition. Bible history seems to have exercised much influence over his style. He writes to his father:—

“I see you take our sweet Benedetta in your arms and shed tears of joy over her, as the patriarch Joseph once wept over Benjamin; but I do not groan in captivity like Joseph, for I am under the gentlest rule in the whole world. Oh! when will the longed-for holidays come? . . . Long live Joseph Gambetta and mama! Long live Cavaignac! . . . So ends my poor speech: it is very silly, no doubt; but you know that my heart is more eloquent than any of Cicero’s orations.”

At the end of the term he obtained a first prize for reading and the highest mention for Latin composition, history, geography, and writing. His letters reproduce many of the witty, spirited anecdotes for which he was already famous; we can foresee a sort of predilection for the spicy stories which he was later to find in Rabelais, one of his favourite authors. He writes to his father:—

“One day Voltaire was dining with some friends; as every one knows, he was fond of ridiculing certain passages in the Bible. Oysters were served. Voltaire, who was very partial to them, ate a great number. He then said, ‘I have eaten as many oysters as Samson killed Philistines.’ His fellow-guests smiled. An *abbé* who was present then said, ‘And you probably ate them with the same jawbone!’ . . . Because you know, dear papa, that Samson slew a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. . . . On another occasion Perron, one of his friends, invited him to dine with him. On the morrow Perron went to call upon his guest. But Voltaire was not at home. So Perron took a piece of

chalk and wrote 'Swine' on the door of Voltaire's study. Voltaire returned home in the afternoon and saw this. He said nothing, but went off to the public square where he found Perron, who said to him, 'I went to call upon you, but you were out.' 'Yes,' replied Voltaire, 'I found your name written in chalk on the door of my study.'"

We can easily imagine with what a burst of laughter the juvenile *bon-vivant* concluded his witty anecdote.

It was during the holidays of 1849 that Léon Gambetta met with the famous accident—which for long gave rise to many absurd reports—which caused the loss of his right eye. The wound refusing to heal, he was obliged to put off his return to Montfaucon; his studies were so interrupted that he had to remain two years in the sixth form. Those who said that the child had wilfully blinded himself with a penknife in order to force his parents to take him away from school, where he hated the priests, only repeated a ridiculous lie. One of his school-fellows tells us the real truth of the accident, and its consequences:—

"This is how the accident happened. Gambetta was spending his holidays at Cahors in his father's house. A cutler named Galtié had set up his booth by the side of his father's shop. The child was always running in and out of the cutler's workshop. One day while a workman was boring a hole in a knife-handle with a steel gimlet worked by a sort of drill-bow, the steel rod snapped off and one of the fragments struck the child in the right eye. Gambetta, for the rest of his life, was blind of one eye. We all knew him at college with his protuberant eye covered with a whitish film, which made him look like a sort of imitation Cyclops. His comrades called him Cocles. Nothing was done to his eye until

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1867, when it was feared that, in consequence of the inflammation and the glaucoma of the right eye, the left one was also becoming affected. At the advice of his comrade and friend, Dr. Fieuzal, Gambetta, who was then a student, went to consult the celebrated oculist, Dr. Wecker, who removed the affected eye and replaced it with a glass eye."

A juvenile letter written to his mother shows that the healthy eye had been threatened with serious complications from the very beginning; the wound, which refused to heal, had been made much worse by a chance blow from a school-fellow while at play.

MONTFAUCON, *December 14, 1849.*

DEAR MAMA,—I am writing to tell you that I am well. I have not suffered from chilblains as yet, but my bad eye hurt me horribly during the holidays. Moreover, this morning, when I shut my left eye while doing my lessons, I found I could scarcely see. Perhaps I hurt myself during the night; and yet I never felt any pain. But when I went to bed, I could see as usual. I am more behindhand this year than I ever was before. I do not know if this is because I returned to school a month later than the other boys. Toulza and all the others are quite well. I wish you could feel as well as I feel. Give my regards to all our neighbours. I embrace you. Your dear and affectionate son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

This tedious and interminable convalescence sobered our wounded hero, much to his regret. His last act of folly was to burn Louis Bonaparte in effigy. For several months he had been hoarding wastepaper, old copy-

books, shavings, and anything combustible which he could find, in a loft. One evening he stuffed all this rubbish into a pair of old trousers, to which he added a hat and a waistcoat padded with straw, then, when night fell, he carried his guy into the middle of the court-yard, set fire to it and led a sort of war-dance round this clumsy effigy of the prince, while he vehemently harangued his comrades. He was nearly expelled from school for this prank; if his father had not been very highly esteemed by the Father Superior, nothing could have saved the little revolutionist from punishment.

MONTFAUCON, *July 8, 1850.*

DEAR PAPA,—I am replying to your letter of the 2nd inst., in which you say that I have wounded you and in which you ask me if I have gone off my head that I talk of becoming a sailor. But I don't want to make you unhappy. And yet, what would you say to a father who would not let his son follow the profession which he had chosen for himself? What do you think of it? And then, you know, we die only when we have to; after all, one may escape the greatest dangers only to perish from some apparently trifling cause. So it comes to the same thing in the end. You say you have had a hard life; I know the profession is a hard one, in fact, so hard that one grows grey before one's time. You add that you do not wish to remind me of my changeable disposition by repeating to me what I used to say about feeling that I was born to sell pepper and moist sugar. But the one does not preclude the other; later we can see which way the wind blows. So, papa, you are the only person who opposes my plan. I think

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that you would be quite content to make a merchant of me. Well! let me be a sailor—all professions are equally honourable. So, papa, I venture to make these remarks while writing to you, hoping that they will not displease you. Dear papa, you are so kind as to ask after my eye. It does not hurt me; I can just distinguish black from white, but that is all. Unfortunately, as to what you call my stupid ideas about emulating Jean Bart,* allow me, my dear papa, to tell you that I have not changed my mind.

I embrace you, dear mama. Press one kiss on my sister's rosy cheeks. I embrace you all: Tata, mama, Joseph Gambetta, Benedetta.

Your devoted son unto death,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

We see that, had it not been for the accident in the cutler's shop, a hereditary vocation might perhaps have drawn the child towards a seafaring life. His father, who had no intention of allowing such a thing, snubbed him well; whereupon Léon obediently gave in to his father's wishes and said no more about the matter.

MONTFAUCON, *November 10, 1850.*

DEAR MAMA AND PAPA,—I am very sorry to tell you that it is settled that I am to be put in the sixth form, as I have not finished last year's course of lectures and they do not wish me to be one of the last boys in the class. I protested, but in vain; and now I am in the sixth form with my old professor, M. Auferin. After

* *Jean Bart* (1651–1702), a fisherman's son who, by his own efforts and talents, became vice-admiral and one of France's greatest naval heroes.

all, I shall be much better off, because I shall be better able to look up my Greek and other subjects. M. Bonhomme and M. Gratacap told me that I should do no good in the fifth form. Dear papa, I am dreadfully unhappy. You might, if you would, make me very happy: I can either be last in the fifth form or high up in the sixth; this, dear papa, is what worries me. I could cry, I feel so cross. No doubt there are other boys who ought to go down; but there are three or four who might go up. They are left where they are because they can do nothing and are just as well off at the bottom of the sixth form as they would be in the fifth. Now choose and tell me, please, if you wish me to stay in the fifth or to go down into the sixth. Dear papa, I should be able to get on with my Latin, and next year I should be high up in the fifth. I did very little last year in the sixth; for when one only returns at the end of the term, it is already too late to do anything. Now, dear papa, let us change the subject, for I am crying. . . .

As usual, it was Gambetta's mother who told him the good news that his father had acceded to his request and consoled the heart-broken child.

MONTFAUCON, *November 21, 1850.*

DEAR MAMA,—I am replying to your dear letter of the 19th inst., which made me very happy. You will want to know why I did not write sooner: this is the reason. It was because I did not want to write until I could tell you that I was second in my class. So let me tell you, dear mama, that I was second in translation, and second in Latin exercises, and that

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I hope to be first next time. My tutor, M. Auferin, is delighted to see that I have made so much progress in my exercises, for I used always to be one of the last. I think that you will be no less pleased than he is. I was also glad to get a letter from that kind M. Sisco.* I assure you, dear mama, that he will be glad to see that I have passed well, and that I am second out of twenty-six. . . ."

We can see by the following rather pompous letters that the twelve-year-old scholar had made progress; already we notice, notwithstanding their bombastic style, signs of his wonderfully affectionate disposition.

MONTFAUCON, *December 29, 1850.*

DEAR PAPA AND MAMA,—I wrote to you not so very long ago; but my last letter was only to tell you of unimportant events. The year is dying; another year is dawning. Alas! I know not what to wish you. The best, the most sincere, the most sublime wish which one can frame for the happiness of the father and the mother whom one loves, is contained in three words: I love you! In short, no one has yet exhausted the depth of that wish, short though it be; whole volumes would not suffice to explain the meaning of those three words uttered by an affectionate heart. And who, better than a beloved father or mother, can understand the meaning, the force, the depth and the sublimity of those words? No one, no, no one can do so better than they can. For a mother's heart contains all the affection which one can possibly imagine, especially when that heart belongs to a mother like mine. As for a father's heart,—

* Lieutenant Sisco, to whom Gambetta, as a token of affection, dedicated his maiden speech.

who, among all those men who flatter themselves that no one ever loved their sons better than they do,—who, I say, who loves his son more than my father loves me? I ask my heart, and it replies: Nobody, nobody! The year 1850 is fading away and Time, with his merciless scythe, has already hurled it into eternity, while the brilliant 1851 appears crowned with roses to us poor children who know naught of life's vicissitudes and the fickleness of fortune. Let us pray that the year 1851 may for long be remembered by mankind as a year of peace rendered illustrious, let us hope, by the presidency of Cavaignac. I must now wish you all the compliments of the season. I hope that God will protect you, that He will shower His good gifts upon you, and that He will give you good health; that He will let you live so that I may still love you, and that, like a frail reed swayed by every breath from heaven, I may find shelter from the chilly blast under the wings of my mother and my father; and thus, instead of breaking, I may be able to bend before the fury of the storm. Yes, this is what your son, who loves you and who will never cease to love you, wishes for you. Dear father and mother, I hope that God will not only hear my prayers but yours also. I wish you a happy new year: may Heaven shower all its gifts upon you! And you, dear Tata, you who took care of me in my childhood and who are still taking care of me, no, I will never forget you. Dearest, you will live in my heart; these words do not come from the lips; they come from the bottom of my heart, from the depths of my soul. So, dear Tata, I wish you a happy new year. I wish you good health; and I hope, with all my heart and soul, that God will let you live, so that I may continue to love you. Yes,

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dear aunt, I hope He will do so. Dear Tata, I repeat what I have already said : my love for you, dear Tata, is comprised in three words : I love you ! And those words contain everything that the heart of a son can feel for his second mother. So adieu ; time is getting short. I kiss you with all my heart, ardently hoping that my prayers may be granted. Adieu, and a happy new year ! And you, dear sister, you whom I love with the love of a brother for his sister, I hope that you will send me a few lines, dear Benedetta. If you knew how I love you : I know that you love me too, yes, and I love you ; how could I do otherwise ?

There ! that is quite settled ! It is true that we quarrel when we are together. But let me tell you like a good philosopher : *qui amat castigat*. Here is the translation : he chasteneth that loveth well. But I won't repeat that saying ; as for that old brute, the philosopher, you will agree with me that he ought to have said : *qui amat parcat*, which means : he who loves forgives. I conclude my letter with a kiss, wishing you a happy new year.

N.B.—Dear parents, I must tell you that I was first in Latin version to-day, December 27th.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

MONTFAUCON, December 30, 1850.

I hope that M. Sisco, lieutenant in the 44th regiment of troops of the line, is well. O M. Sisco ! how I wish General Cavaignac would climb to the top of the tree, and that he would make you captain !

This very incoherent letter concluded with a pencil drawing representing a tricolour flag beneath which he,

who was later to organise the league for the protection of his fatherland, had written—

“Let us follow the flag! Long live Cavaignac! Long live the Republic! Long live the reds! Down with the whites!”

At the prize-giving at Montfaucon in 1852, Gambetta received first prizes for ancient history and for Latin version, and honourable mentions for Greek and Latin themes, grammar, and geography.

A letter from the Abbé Auferin, who had been the boy's tutor at the seminary, tells us the real reason of Joseph Gambetta's behaviour when he took his son away from Montfaucon and sent him, in the beginning of 1852, to the Lycée of Cahors, where he was placed in the fourth form. The Abbé Auferin, who died in September, 1903, wrote after Gambetta's death:—

“I had been tutor to Léon for four years, when one prize-giving day his father, who had come to fetch him, told me that he was going to take his son away from the little seminary and send him to finish his studies at the Lycée of Cahors. I could not refrain from telling the father what a pity it was that he had formed such a resolution, and I added that it was all the more so because his son could be influenced either to be very good or very bad according to his *entourage*. The father replied that he was very much obliged to me for my kindness to his son and for the interest which I had taken in him, but that it grieved him to see so little of Léon: at Cahors he would be able to enjoy having him at home, and his mother would be glad to be able to go and see him frequently. He then reminded me that he was a merchant and that the directors of the

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Lycée, to which he was purveyor as well as to our little seminary, complained that he was guilty of partiality in not confiding his son to their charge, and that his son had already spent several years at Montfaucon. I replied that he was perfectly right in some respects, but that his son's moral future should come before all things. I saw that it was useless to argue with him and that business came first in the father's estimation. So I ceased to try and convince him."

The good *abbé* had not guessed the real reasons for this decision; the truth of the matter was that the affection of Gambetta's mother for her child was not untinged with jealousy, and that she could not bear to be separated from him; then Joseph Gambetta, with his liberal and republican opinions, wished to get his son, who was now growing up, away from the excellent but narrow-minded instruction of the seminary: he did not want to make a priest of his son, but a well-informed man of business.

Dr. Clary says: "Gambetta's entry into the Lycée of Cahors in 1851 was quite a festive occasion. He soon became popular, not for any brilliant talents as a scholar, but for the influence which he immediately gained over his school-fellows. During his triumphal tour in May, 1881, he visited the old Lycée, in every nook and corner of which he found some dear memory of his past youth. And he confessed to his young audience, whom he affectionately called his 'condisciples,' and whom he recommended not to try to imitate his example too closely—

"I must confess that I have not always deserved to be held up to my young successors as a good example.

I often kicked over the traces and, believe me, I am sorry for it now.'"

He alluded to his studies while in the fourth and fifth forms, where he had worked fairly well, without, however, displaying any remarkable assiduity. His intelligence, his memory, his facility for hard work, and especially the instinct innate in every Latinist, helped him to secure a prominent position among his comrades. But with this he was content until he entered the second form, where his tutor, M. Arnault, a very learned and highly esteemed humanist, suddenly revealed to the young Gambetta the fact that he was endowed with exceptional talents. His old schoolmates well remember his wonderful gift for elocution and his fine historical essays. One of these friends, Paul Armand, wrote after the tribune's death:—

"French literature and history were our comrade's two specialities. Our professor of history was M. Anselme, who afterwards became professor at a Lycée in Paris. Under his guidance, Gambetta developed a great taste for history. He used to go and study at the municipal library, which was fairly well stocked; on his return, laden with notes, he would try to catch the young professor making a mistake, and thus astonish his fellow-pupils by his complete knowledge of the subject in question.

"While still at college he would discuss political economy. He persuaded his father to buy Garnier's short treatise for him, and he used to amaze us with his aphorisms during our walks. Our professor of rhetoric, M. Arnault, foresaw that Gambetta would become an orator. One day he told his pupils to write an essay on 'Etienne Marcel's Speech to the States-general in 1356.' Gambetta, armed with knowledge gleaned

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during his historical researches, made the provost speak in terms which aroused his tutor's admiration. Not only did M. Arnault read Gambetta's speech *in extenso* before the whole class, but he showed it to his colleagues, and thus the pupil's task went the round of the Lycée.

"Gambetta was very popular with his classmates. He had extraordinary influence over them. It was he who arranged all our games; it was he who settled where we should walk on holiday afternoons; it was he who took the lead in all our discussions, who spoke *de omni re scibili* with inexhaustible spirit. Moreover, he was well up in every subject. . . ."

He was also distinguished for his wonderful aptitude for the Greek language. Later, while studying for the bar, he keenly enjoyed hearing M. Hase lecture at the Sorbonne; on more than one occasion that learned Hellenist discussed with him the meaning of some abstruse passage. Did Demosthenes' melodious language remind this descendant of seafaring men and corsair merchants of some long ago voyage of discovery along the shores of Greece?

And this was not the only atavism which stirred his blood during his early student days. Like La Fontaine and Rabelais, he had already begun his attacks upon the monks; these attacks must have been prompted by some confused echo of the hatred of the Italian republics in the sixteenth century for the Pope's priestly militia.

M. Arnault having suggested to his pupils that they should write an essay on the beneficial influence exercised on civilisation by the monks during the Middle Ages, Gambetta wrote a treatise in which he reversed the statement; this was the future tribune's first challenge,

a clumsy but a determined attempt, the first syllable of his famous warcry against clericalism.

"As the ploughman," cried he, "bends over the handle of his plough, and tears away the briers which hinder the progress of his team, so the monks who checked the advance of progress and civilisation ought to have been rooted out of French soil."

Considering that he had been educated at a religious establishment, the above sentence was scarcely flattering to his tutors. He was the twenty-fourth out of thirty scholars, and deserved the mention "bad" for inattention and backwardness in religious subjects.

The headmaster, in his report for July, 1853, stated: "He has a great deal of aptitude; he is a good boy, but too thoughtless. He does not make as much progress as he ought to do."

While in the second form, which the young Gambetta eventually reached, thanks to the good M. Arnault's help, he received prizes for general excellence, Greek and Latin versions, French history, and honourable mentions for Greek exercises, cosmography, and history. By good luck M. Arnault was appointed professor of rhetoric during the holidays, and so he followed his favourite pupil to the head of the class in which the latter was destined to shine. Demosthenes, chief of all orators, especially aroused his enthusiasm; he had learnt the *Olynthiennes** by heart; he remembered them so well that one evening, some years later, the young advocate, while staying with Clément Laurier at Lépineau, recited and translated one of the Athenian tribune's speeches with such spirit and showed himself such a skilled

* *Olynthiennes*: Demosthenes' speech in which he urges the Athenians to succour Olynthus, which was being besieged by Philip.

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metaphorist that he astonished Villemain and won his admiration.

His father's picturesque tales, so full of reminiscences of his cruises in American waters, had developed in Gambetta a passion for travelling. He longed to visit Celle-Ligure and the surrounding country with all its wonderful charm and beauty.

"You shall go when you have taken your degree!" said his father solemnly.

And whenever letters were received from his father's birthplace, the young collegian would dream of going there. On one occasion, when his uncle Michel was about to start for the Riviera, Léon Gambetta wrote to his paternal grandmother, Benedetta Gambetta, his sister's godmother, who resided at Celle-Ligure:—

CAHORS, November 8, 1854.

MY VERY DEAR GRANDMAMA,—I am writing to you with tears in my eyes, transported with joy. Your son will bring you your grandson's letter. We are both your very dear children; although there is a great difference in our ages, filial love unites us; and to both alike you are ever a kind, amiable mother. A long road, vast countries separate us, but nothing can separate a son's soul from his mother's heart. If a breeze from Italy could blow round our dwelling, it would bring us your kind words and you would hear our prayers for your happiness.

Dear mother, be assured that heaven will reunite us some day! You will then be able to press your family, your sons, your children's children, to your heart. As the years pass, your brow, radiant with happiness, will remain unclouded: our youth will sink into your soul, and thus

your life will be prolonged. Be comforted, grandmama : that day is not far distant ! . . . Two more winters, and you will see a whole generation clustering round your grandmotherly skirts. Then you will tremble with joy. You will love this family as it loves you, as it adores you. You will see, first of all, mothers who will be second daughters to you, daughters who will reproduce your features, and a young man, he who writes this letter to you, and who, in the name of all, will beg you to give them your love and your blessing. Give it to Michel for all of us. May God bless you and keep you for long to enjoy the love of your big and little children ! Adieu, dear mama Benedetta, adieu in the name of all of us, in the name of your grand-daughter, Benedetta, who is quite proud to bear your dear name ! But I am mistaken. I must not say *Adieu*, but *Au revoir et à bientôt !*

LÉON GAMBETTA.

After rhetoric, philosophy, or, as they called it then, *logique*, finished our young collegian's studies and won for him an honourable mention for French dissertation at the general examinations of the five *lycées* by the *Académie* of Toulouse, which finally gave him the *Diplôme de Bachelier ès Lettres*.

The inhabitants of Cahors still remember a certain incident which happened at the prize-giving and which made a tremendous sensation at the time. Gambetta was informed that he had won second prizes for general excellence, Latin and French dissertation and Latin translation. The young laureate of the academical competition made no remark when he was given second prizes for three of the above subjects. But he loudly protested when he was only awarded a second prize for

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French dissertation; he appealed to his comrades, who declared that he deserved the first prize; they gave him a noisy ovation when he refused to accept the second prize, for his professors had very unjustly awarded the first prize to the son of the prefect of the department of le Lot. The future tribune perceived that he was the victim of favouritism, and he protested with all his might.

Joseph Gambetta now only had to fulfil his promise: he was going to take his son to Italy. We must now place the pen in the hand of our newly fledged bachelor; he alone can recount his marvellous journey and tell us how he enjoyed it.

MARSEILLES, *December 7, 1856.*

MY DEAR MAMA,--We left Cahors a week ago, and we have only just reached Marseilles. The South of France is so beautiful that one would like to live there for ever. We visited Montpellier, Lunel, where we were unable to find any of our relations, and finally Aigues-Mortes, where we vainly looked for Paul, who had left that town two days previous to our arrival; I hope to meet him in Nice. I saw the sea for the first time at Aigues-Mortes; it is indeed the most beautiful sight of all the many beautiful sights of nature. The wind from time to time lashes the waves into huge mountains, on whose crests one often perceives a belated fisherman. A gust of wind comes and covers the shore at your feet with salt. There are millions of tons of salt lying at the foot of the ramparts of Aigues-Mortes. However, the climate is very trying in this country; the mosquitoes, mists, and fevers which exhale from the marshes warn you to decamp if you don't want to leave your bones there. So we soon made off with headaches and colds, which

we did not lose until we got to Nîmes, which is the most beautiful place we have seen as yet. We went to visit the *Arènes*, a gigantic edifice built on two rows of pillars and provided with stone steps sufficiently numerous to seat from thirty to forty thousand persons. But the most beautiful thing of all was the *Maison-Carrée*, with the tombs of the ancient Romans, with mosaics and a museum of modern paintings, which are not very numerous, for they are all masterpieces. At last from Nîmes we reach Marseilles.

One would think that bad luck attended us in our researches for our relatives. We found neither Paul nor Jouglas; and at Marseilles we were unable to see M. Marcel d'André; we went to call upon him in the rue Gouffrit; on our arrival there we were told that he had moved his manufactory to Blagne six or seven years ago. So we were again unlucky! But I console myself with the view from my window; from the Hôtel de Gênes one can almost touch the masts of the vessels lying in the harbour. It is like a forest; there are so many boats one cannot see the water between them. What a sight! One can hear the sailors singing over their work; some are going on board, others are landing; here some sailors are hoisting a sail, there others are reefing another sail; animation, noise, and inextricable confusion seem to reign everywhere. There are Moors, Greeks, Turks, Genoese—especially Genoese; in short, there are more Genoese than Marseillais. It is extraordinary: one sees nobody but Genoese, and one hears nothing but their dialect; Marseilles without her *Cannetière* (which is not nearly as pretty as they say) would be nothing but a miniature Genoa! We went with my father to the Calvary of Sainte-Marie de la Garde, which

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is on the summit of a mountain. But don't be afraid: the road was not dangerous; it was a continual succession of gardens and walks adorned with lawns and flower-beds, labyrinths, magnificent views of the sea and the mountain, Marseilles at our feet and Corsica in the distance—in fact, an enchanting and delightful picture which made us forget the fatiguing walk and gave us a glimpse of the wonders of Italy. . . . I embrace you and all my dear ones.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

NICE, *September 11, 1856.*

MY DEAR MAMA,—Here we are in Italy! I can scarcely believe it, and yet the scenery obliges me to allow it. Whole fields of roses, olive-trees, jasmines, and orange-trees make Nice an earthly paradise. This morning a little shower fell, which cooled the atmosphere and made the country smell very sweet and fresh. So we rushed off into the fields, where we should still be if I had not had to write to you. *Pécaïre!** we must really send you a whiff of perfume from this blessed land, to you who allowed us to visit it and who are the anchor of our salvation. I want to tell you of the sea and of Paul, whom we found at last in Nice. After a few seconds of emotion and friendly greetings on both sides, we broached the important subject of our absent friends, the traveller's favourite topic of conversation; but I must say in our praise that we were very kind in our remarks concerning our relatives, and in this we were very generous, for we might have followed the rule which I think holds good both in Italy and in France. . . . As to Antibes, it is rather a nice place, surrounded by the sea; it is a sweet-scented spot only a few hours

* *Pécaïre!* an exclamation used by the inhabitants of the South of France.

from Nice and one hour from Cannes, which is the prettiest town in the whole of the South. We had plenty of time to see the country, for we stayed there two days; and had it not been for M. Rigal, of Cannes, we should probably have been obliged either to stay there for ever or else return to Cahors. Just think, dear mama, they took us for republican insurgents and they refused to sign our passports! The consul at Antibes refused point-blank to have anything to do with them; but the consul at Cannes, with M. Rigal's permission, gave in and signed them and thus enabled us to pass the frontier; and so we started for Nice, from which town I now write to you. Nice is very prettily situated on the seashore and built in the shape of a horseshoe; the houses are magnificent; there are beautiful walks, many English blood-horses, French mongrels, and Italian mules. All the houses are for sale or hire; there are *cafés* and street-singers in every corner. And this is Nice. It is very amusing, but very expensive; the British nation has accustomed the natives to *bankes-notes* (*sic*), so we are off to Genoa to-morrow. We send you our kisses and our love, as well as to my dear aunt and my sister, in the name of my father and Uncle Paul; in conclusion I beg you to comb out Courte's hair for me—either with or without a rake—and to salute the whole neighbourhood of which I am a devoted inhabitant. Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

CELLE, September 13, 1856.

MY DEAR MAMA,—I have so many things to tell you that I really don't know where to begin, so I will do my best to follow our itinerary, which has stopped here for the present.

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We left Nice on the 12th and entered a land where everything is marvellous and magnificent except the roads, and perhaps I am rather hard on them. I ought to forgive the municipality, for the said roads are like avenues lined with flower-beds. When one walks between oleanders, orange-trees in full blossom, olive-trees laden with fruit, and scented jasmines, one may be excused if one does not pay much attention to the path beneath one's feet and if one only opens one's eyes and one's nostrils to smell and enjoy the scents and the delicious scenery. This land is really a privileged country, an earthly paradise; and when one sees the roads partly hewn in the rock, one seems to see prehistoric man straining every nerve to make a highway through Eden and trying to prove to future generations that everything in this garden was not the work of God's hands and that man was master. And this really is the impression produced upon the spectator by the Italian roads running through this smiling country. We must confess that the traces left by mankind do not redound to his credit, and that comparison makes him appear even more odious. But I am far from blaming him altogether; for it is very easy to say in his defence that it is better to have a bad road than none at all (and to this I agree); but it would be much better to keep them in order, and to this every one will agree. But the railroad is coming and will not leave them time to do much in that line. Within two years' time we shall get to Genoa in twenty-four hours; and it will be *una bellezza*, as the Italians say, in the midst of the scenery which you know so well, to rush along the seashore from Nice to Genoa. For once mankind will triumph over space

and earthly obstacles. At the same time he will bring back to an impoverished country prosperity, animation, and the money which one feels is lacking everywhere. But do not let us speak of the towns, of the reverse of the medal, of the state of Italy's finances, for we shall only find poverty, fearful penury, death, and famine: it is dreadful to behold! People say, in order to forget this ever open sore and to deceive themselves, that Italy still thirsts after artistic beauty and that she is really beautiful, really great; the humblest village can prove this fact by showing us a spire, a magnificent church which, one might think from its beauty, was situated in Paris or Rome! We saw the church of Celle, which is a market town of three hundred inhabitants, and I can tell you that it is a perfect jewel: with its marble, gold, and lapis-lazuli, its pictures by great masters, and its exquisite statuary, it is indeed a marvel of art, a diamond set in a grove of olive-trees. One reaches it by a broad flight of marble steps leading to a door supported by pillars of black marble, in one of which a holy-water basin has been cut. Through this door one enters the church, which I thought was a masterpiece until I went to Savona yesterday, where I saw a basilica which was so beautiful that I could not utter a word. Pictures, frescoes, columns, vestibules, everything was magnificent, sumptuous, artistic, faultless in the taste one realises but cannot define except with great difficulty. And just think! the larger the population of the town the more magnificent are the churches. We shall soon see the Genoese churches, which, the peasants say, are the most beautiful edifices imaginable. But I see that the churches are going to take too much room in my letter, so I must come to the point. We

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found grandmama in good health, with a fresh colour and very smiling. She has the most adorable old face one could wish to see; her hair is long, whiter than snow, and her skin is even whiter than her hair; her two little pink lips are always smiling, and her face is lighted up by two little black eyes which are still very bright. She has the sweetest face and is the dearest old woman a painter could wish to paint. I am very sorry that I cannot draw, I would bring you some sketches of her. Papa's sister is also here with two charming nieces who begin to understand French, and Paul's wife, who with her daughter can still sing "*Un vieux pêcheur sur les bords de l'Isère*" quite nicely. Papa is in the best of health; he is up to his neck in oxygen; in short, he knows everybody: he is kissed by this one; that one shakes his hand; people take off their hats to him; here some one smiles and nods at him; there he has to pay a visit; now he must go to a party. He gets up at eight o'clock and he goes to bed at nine; he smokes twenty pipes a day, eats four big meals, and, from time to time, takes a walk of four or five kilometres; such is the life of this jolly little friar whom a pacha might envy. So he gets fatter as you look at him. Accept my very sincere congratulations and give my affectionate regards to Mlle. Benedetta, to my aunt, and to the distinguished neighbourhood to which I have the honour to belong! And may God have you in His holy keeping! Your affectionate brat,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

CELLE, September 29, 1856.

MY VERY DEAR MAMA,—When your letter reached us (and it was high time that it should do so) we were

in one of the most interesting situations for any traveller who is at all fond of his knife and fork: we were seated at an Italian table served in the French manner, at the house of our cousin, Giacomo Galleano, who is the nicest, most good-natured cousin of all the cousins who possess the above-named qualities. He is nice for several reasons and good-natured for several other reasons, as shown by his conversation and especially by his cookery; he always has several good dishes which a French lady, for she comes from Paris, dresses, or has dressed, with all the greater care because they remind her of the country which she still regrets at times. This delightful family gave us such a cordial welcome, which later became so friendly and so familiar, that we felt quite at home, as if we were still with you, you dear mama, of whom this lady reminds me; for, like yourself, she has a little boy and a daughter who are not nearly so old as we, but who seem very promising. This is the nice family which Uncle Michel painted in such dark colours, and such false colours, too. Giacomo, according to him, was a bear; I can understand that he seemed a bear to Uncle Michel, for the latter had *the cheek* to go and demand le Figuetto, which represents half his fortune; but that is an old story. Although he is rough and cold in his manners to people whom he does not like, he is all the kinder and more communicative to his friends. He is a typical seafaring man; he always has some thrilling yarn to spin. He can tell many a charming story, although his vocabulary is rather limited. He has given us the run of his house, which is splendidly situated and very comfortable. It is an old feudal castle which has lately been restored, and it stands on the peak of a mountain in the Apen-

nines surrounded by olive-trees and vines; this castle overlooks a deep valley which is green all the year round and which just at present is looking particularly beautiful. The olive-trees are laden with fruit, and round their branches twine vines whose black and white clusters mingle with pendant green olives. The two mountains which enclose the valley are cultivated in terraces, now enamelled with exquisite flowers, with here and there an orange-tree or a lemon-tree to offer the tired traveller shade, perfume, and golden fruit with which to quench the thirst often caused by the burning sun. But I have forgotten to describe the topography of the castle to you; we were saying that it overlooked a deep, smiling valley at the bottom of which lie the white houses of Celle. Towards the north one sees the azure sea beating at the foot of the mountain; westward one perceives the Riviera di Genova stretching away into the distance; to the right the scenery is more varied: it is one huge garden studded with numerous villages: Albissola, Savona, which is a big town, Fanole, Albenga, and so on to the kingdom of Monaco, perhaps the most charming spot along the Riviera di Genova. The scenery is different in the south, and its beauty is more severe. One sees a long curtain of lofty black mountains covered with eternal snow; these are the Apennines. The intervening space is filled with numerous hillocks, wind-blown, arid, desolate hills; here and there one sees a few stunted pine-trees trying to stretch their green plumes towards the sky and looking like a regiment of soldiers on the march when the wind rushes through their topmost branches.

It was here that Bonaparte performed such wonders, conquered glory and with it Italy. One notices sandy

mounds; the earth has been trampled on and disturbed. Here is Montenotte, and a little farther on is Marengo. I did not see Marengo; but I went to Montenotte one morning, and that day I walked from thirty to thirty-six kilometres. On reaching the battle-field, I found nothing but a plateau on the top of a high mountain with broken earth and great mounds of chalky soil. A peasant told me that Bonaparte had beaten General Colli here. Every one believes, without having seen this country, that Bonaparte was a great tactician; but when once one has visited the scene of this battle, one begins to say: He was the god of war! My father did not want to walk so far; however, we had a fine walk among the mountains: twelve or fifteen kilometres; we were rather tired, but we were amply rewarded by the view; I dare not try to paint the scene, for such a picture requires an artist's touch. We went to Genoa, and here my admiration could go no further; I found myself laughing under my breath just like an idiot. From Celle to Genoa the road is delightful; but as one approaches Genoa, the country is adorned with sumptuous palaces, magnificent gardens which astonish the passer-by. We saw one garden in particular which must have had at least sixty statues in it. But at Genoa our cousin Galleano showed us even greater marvels. Genoa is the town of palaces; one sees colossal edifices entirely built of marble, with statues at every corner, great verandahs at a prodigious height which resemble gardens with marble pavements, fountains and rocks, from which streams of water gush out and meander among strawberry-plants. But all this is nothing in comparison with the church of the Annunciation. It is just like a huge inverted ship, with a white marble portico sixty metres high; the interior

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of the edifice is old and the walls are cracked; grass grows there and, judging by appearances, no one would wish to go inside. However, we did so, and we thought we should never get out again. Picture to yourself an endless vista of arches covered with gilding, frescoes, lapis-lazuli, porphyry; and so slender, so intricate, so bold in conception that you tremble lest they should fall; these arches are supported by marble pillars which look like bamboo-canes. I have no room to add more. To be continued in our next.

Your devoted son, who embraces you,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

BRIANÇON, *October 4, 1856.*

MY VERY DEAR MAMA,—I told you that the Annunciata was a miracle of splendour, art, audacity, and beauty. All these qualities together make one realise the smallness of humanity and the grandeur of the sublime and beautiful. You walk along speechless and hardly realising what you are about under the marble vaults of its eighteen chapels; and when you come to yourself a little, you find yourself saying: "How beautiful! how grand!" And that is all. The second time you see it, you experience the same sensation; but on the third visit, as the mind of man soon grows accustomed to all kinds of sensations, to the gigantic as well as to the infinitely small, to the sublime as to the ridiculous, you feel bold enough to count the chapels, the pilasters, the cupolas, the frescoes, the *ex-voto*, and a slight feeling of pride comes over you; this beautiful, grand, marvellous work, which humiliates you because it forces you to acknowledge that God is all-powerful, is the work of men's hands; and then you understand that man is

lord of creation and that he alone can cross the boundary which separates the Work from the chief Workman. It is quite natural that we should experience this feeling and one need not be a great philosopher to do so ; for our dignity is concerned and we must learn to keep it ; that is to say, we must respect the principles of right and duty. But I see that I am talking metaphysics. Forgive me, dear mama. I hasten to pass to another subject.

The church of the Annunciation is without doubt the most beautiful edifice in Genoa ; and yet you see there many magnificent palaces almost perfect in beauty ; and when you ask to whom these regal residences belong, you are informed that they belong to some oil-merchant, dealer in charcoal, or some such necessary article of food or fuel. And this often happens ; in fact, it is the same all over Genoa. Now that I have seen Turin, the capital of the kingdom of Sardinia, I can say that Genoa is the most splendid town in the whole monarchy. Turin is beautiful, but less so than Genoa. It is a modern town ; its architecture and its streets are absolutely regular ; it is the theory of the straight line put into practice. In the centre of the town there is a great palace which serves as a Bastille in the midst of a huge square ornamented with porticoes ; this is the centre of the circle from which the streets radiate in four directions. From the middle of each public square one can see the four cardinal points through straight wide streets forming a cross, and reproduced a dozen times in order to make the town, which is surrounded by an avenue of century-old trees, beyond which are the Champ de Mars and the very remarkable fortifications.

The houses in Turin (for there are no palaces) are all

alike; they all have the same number of windows and balconies; it is quite funny: one would think that one was always in the same street. There are few monuments, and they are old and dilapidated. The king's palace is also very old; it is a vast black building with a huge courtyard enclosed by a high iron and bronze railing. The gate in the middle of this railing is guarded on either side by two bronze horsemen, who both bear the star of genius on their foreheads, while one holds the sceptre of peace and the other the clarion of war. The appearance of the King, whom we saw with his Ministers, is quite spoilt by a pair of red moustaches which for size and ugliness cannot be beaten anywhere on the face of the globe. The museum is fine, like all museums. The interior of the palace is as rich as such places usually are; in short, the town is finer than its monuments. There are no churches worth mentioning except the Annunciata. The walls of the town are laved by the Po, which is narrower at Turin than the Lot, and by the Dura, which flows into the Po north of Turin. At this spot the river widens somewhat, and a wonderful bridge has been built across it. It only has one arch and the top is as smooth as a mirror; this marvel is the work of an Italian engineer who studied in France. Now that I have compared Genoa and Turin, I can tell you that Genoa resembles a residence of princes, whereas, in reality, it is the town of shopkeepers; and Turin resembles a town of shopkeepers, whereas it is the residence of princes and ministers. The contrast is very strange, but it is true. After having explored every nook and cranny of Turin, we decided to start for Lyons *via* Grenoble. The scenery changed completely; three hours after leaving Turin we found

ourselves in the bosom of the snowy Alps. It was terribly beautiful: a steep road led through a magnificent valley, with fields where the crops were still standing; they were reaping down in the valley (if one can call it such); and on all sides we saw a triple range of ice-clad mountains on whose slopes the crows only build their nests to a certain distance. We alighted from the carriage in order to enjoy the scenery a little better; it was a delightful sight! On both sides of the road mountain torrents fell in showers; huts hanging over the edge of a rock served as a shelter to belated huntsmen; there were gigantic fir-trees half-stripped of their branches, tree-trunks which had been swept along by mountain torrents; here and there we saw Savoyards knocking down walnuts, while a herd of cows together with a few goats browsed on a steep but verdant peak; and in the midst of all this beauty, beautiful because so terrible, we saw the road made by Napoleon the Great in order to transport his army over the Mont Genève. Such was the spectacle which we enjoyed for a whole day while the sun helped us to forget the somewhat keen mountain air and made a delightful contrast with the snowy Alps. We finally crossed Mont Genève, at the foot of which mountain, in a plain watered by the Durance, lies the fortified town of Briançon. We hoped to set off immediately; but we had neglected to engage places in the diligence, and so we were obliged to pass the day and the night of the 4th inst. there; so I avail myself of this opportunity to write to you. This city, or rather this market-town, is dark and ugly and small because it is shut in by such well-constructed and well-situated forts that they are practically impregnable and could bar the progress of an army of two hundred thou-

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sand men. The town is about the same size as Mercuès; there are four thousand soldiers scattered about in the different forts which we are going to visit this afternoon and which I will describe later to you. Papa much regrets Turin, where he ate two excellent dinners. As for me, I keenly enjoy stopping at this place and at that; so I can afford to philosophise. We start this afternoon at five o'clock for Grenoble, which we reach about ten o'clock. It will take us five or six hours to get from there to Lyons, where we shall stay a couple of days, when I will write to you and Sisco. We are both in perfect health; we embrace you and the whole family. Grandmama, who cried when she bade us goodbye, is also very well. My compliments to the whole neighbourhood. Your dear son,

LÉON GAMBETTA,
who loves you very much.

The return of the two pilgrims from Italy to Cahors immediately gave rise to a very important question. What were they going to do with the young bachelor?

His father, who did not like his wishes to be thwarted, wanted him to stand behind the counter of his shop and to teach him the grocery business; however, the female members of his household gently but obstinately resisted this plan. The Mayor of Cahors, M. Achille Bessières, landlord of the house in which M. Gambetta kept his *Bazar génois*, came to the rescue of the mother and aunt. By reminding the father of young Léon's early successes, by assuring the old mariner that his son was destined to win fame and fortune—for his relatives and his friends had always recognised his wonderful talents and realised that he was far superior to the other

members of his family—they managed to make Joseph Gambetta relinquish his selfish plans. At last it was irrevocably decided that Léon was to go to Paris, where he was to continue his studies at the *Faculté de droit*. He accepted without a murmur all the stipulations of his father, who, with a parsimony even excessive in a provincial, reduced the student's allowance to the smallest sum possible. But nothing could frighten young Léon. The whole family conspired to smuggle various luxuries to him; sometimes they sent a few louis hoarded in secret, or eatables, or clothes—anything these three women could save from the father's strict supervision; for when once his books were made up, nothing could induce him to alter his accounts.

Gambetta left Cahors in January, 1857, and started out on his expedition to conquer Paris.

II

GAMBETTA'S STUDENT DAYS

PARIS, *January 22, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—Although I have delayed writing to you, it is not because I did not want to do so, for I was very grieved to leave you. I cried when I saw you so sad; and now, while I write these lines, the tears come into my eyes. No, it is not my heart which is at fault. This is the cause of my silence: I did not want to write to you until I could tell you something definite, or that something, at least, was probable.

Having left Cahors with a nice little sum of money, for which I thank you, I had no need to worry concerning the first few months of my sojourn in Paris. In a word, the journey cost me from 40 to 42 francs; therefore, on reaching Paris, I found that I had from 215 to 220 francs in hand including the present which my mother gave me. Now, as my board only costs me 20 sous a day, or 22 at the very most, and sometimes only 25 centimes, and as I have a very small room, with this capital I shall be able to get along for two months and a half while waiting for the post, which, I hope, is not very far distant and which I shall probably be able to

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announce to you in my next letter. I have conferred with Eugène Guilhou concerning an attorney named M. Quatremère who lives near the Louvre and who, I think, seems anxious to take me into his employ. For I feel anything but inclined to accept the terrible post of usher, which, however, I would accept from M. Cain if I could get nothing else. But I hope that Heaven will take pity on me and that my star will be kind to me. I have been to see Sisco, who read me a lecture, and very rightly too, I allow. But he is too severe; for, after all, I shall probably only spend three years of my youth and 250 francs and a few odd centimes of my patrimony in order to study the queen of sciences, try my luck and see what the future holds for me. After all, I shall always be able to fall back upon trade; and at twenty-two years of age one is not, as far as I am aware, too old to learn how to keep a shop. I quite agree with him and with you, dear father, that everything is unknown, uncertain, because hidden in the future; but let me tell you once more that nothing will be wasted or lost because I try to lift a corner of the veil to see what Fate holds for, and hides from me.

So I beg you, dear papa, to write him no more of those letters which make me cry when he reads them to me. Don't worry yourself. Look at the matter in this light, and always believe in the sincere affection of your devoted son,

LEÓN GAMBETTA.

My address is Hôtel du Périgord, No. 1, place de la Sorbonne, if you write to me before the 5th; for I am going to move into a still cheaper room, whither you will not refuse to send me news of yourself, together with

advice which I shall ever respect like a dutiful son. A thousand kisses.*

CAHORS,† *January 28, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—Not receiving any letter from Cahors, and not knowing to what reason to ascribe your lengthy silence, I am writing to beg you not to carry your anger to such lengths that you even deprive me of your dear letters and of your advice, which I shall make it a pleasure to follow.

Be so indulgent, dear papa, as to forgive my audacity and to reply to my letter, I beg of you. I long to see your handwriting. Scold me if you will, but write to me. You know that I have sometimes been cross and disobedient, but I have always loved you so. And you are so kind that you cannot refrain from sending me a kind reply, and I know you so well that I already believe that the beginning of that letter will be more severe than the conclusion. So I have great hopes; and it is assuredly not my father who will dash those hopes to the ground. But don't let us say anything more about a thing which is sure and certain, and let us talk a little of yourself—of your health, of your business, of

* Gambetta's father had hoped that Léon at the last moment would consent to go and study law at Toulouse. Léon, backed by his mother, finally extracted a promise from his father that he would allow him to go to Paris, and nothing would induce him to release his father from that promise. So Joseph Gambetta, who had lately been very severe in his manner towards Léon, refused on the day of his son's departure to go and say goodbye to him when he got into the diligence for Paris. His mother, after having slipped a few coins into his purse (for the student, at his father's wish, was only to be allowed 100 francs a month), accompanied him to the diligence with her daughter Benedetta, Léon's young sister, who was two years younger than he.

† Gambetta dates his letter by mistake from Cahors, whither his thoughts were always wandering.

the future, and especially of the present. I assure you that the life which I am leading just at present would be rather depressing were it not for my books, which make me oblivious to everything around me. In fact, a room under the roof and a 1-franc dinner represent my expenditure for physical and material things; but my mind is better cared for: law, legislature, and the history of the nations in all its forms are enough, I think, to make me forget whether I am comfortable or not. Study teaches us the truth of Christ's words: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"—that is to say, by morality in all its forms. But during one of my races to get my dinner at the restaurant where we used to dine when we were here together, and where I always sit in the place where you sat*—it is so sweet to remember one's family—while rushing off to dine, I say, I met some one; and if I were not in such a desperate hurry to tell you who that some one was, I would bet you a hundred to one that you would never guess whom I met. Well, who was it, then? It was M. Auferin, my old tutor in the sixth form, now in Paris with the family of a very rich man who gives him 2,000 francs a year, exclusive of his board and lodging, for educating his children. You may imagine how we talked! He asked so kindly after your health that I again realised what a wonderful gift my father has for making friends. Then we spoke of my position, and perhaps I may be able to give Greek lessons either to this same family or to some other. At last we said goodbye, with many

* On their way back from Italy during the previous autumn, Gambetta and his father, before returning to Cahors, visited Briançon, Lyons, and Paris.

promises to go and see each other; he is to pay me a visit on Thursday next. He is here with another professor, a great friend of his, with whom I was also on good terms, and whose name is M. Delmas. I think you know him; they are coming together. They are two very useful acquaintances, and perhaps they will help me. A little patience, and who knows what may not happen? . . . "Fortune is so fickle, and especially so in her treatment of young men!" said Charles the Fifth. At all events, I am saving enough from my capital in order to wait until the end of April; and between this and then I shall find a nice berth. I have already been offered several, but they would have only hindered me.

Let us wait, since we risk nothing by waiting; but give me still more courage, I beg you, by writing to me, for I cannot bear to think that you do not wish to write to me.

Let me repeat my address to you; it is still Hôtel du Périgord, No. 1, place de la Sorbonne—that is to say, if you write before the 5th.

LÉON GAMBETTA,

Law Student.

PARIS, *January 30, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—Although I wrote to you only two days ago, I hasten to avail myself of the fact that Sisco is going to see you, to write you a few lines; for the young tree feels all the value of the prop when that prop is taken away. I also feel how pleasant is the store of affection which one finds in one's father and mother, the riches and charm of which one does not learn to appreciate until one leaves one's home for a short time. First of all, we have the same opinions; family affection

besieges us on every side with sweet, tender memories, and makes us feel the lonely present. We even love the fireside lectures in the evening; we love the supper-hour, when the fire crackles and the wind rages outside, and the father, laughing good-naturedly, brings in the *chamayo*.* But these dear memories cannot make you alter your mind; on the contrary, they give you fresh courage, new strength to study, so that you may return all the sooner to these sweet home joys, often so little appreciated in childhood, so bitterly regretted in middle-age.

So I see you all from here, with Sisco and the rest of the family—for I consider him as one of its most important members—seated round the *menestra*,† one adding pepper, the other sprinkling cheese; while, behind your back, you hear the cheerful sound, especially comforting on a cold winter evening, of a real old-fashioned fire before which a fowl is roasting—would to God I could smell it! None will be missing in imagination at that family feast; but the person will be absent of whom you will speak, I am sure, but not, I pray you, without drinking a glass of the prefect's wine to his health, to something better than that—to his success!

So do not be downhearted if one face is absent from that feast: I am with you in imagination, only my feast will cost me less, only 18 sous: for they have agreed, as I am such a regular customer, to let me off 10 centimes. So I shall save 3 francs every month of thirty days and 3 francs 10 centimes every month of thirty-one days; at the end of the month I shall be able

* *Chamayo*: the vine-shoot which blazes so merrily in the peasants' huts along the Genoese coast.

† *Menestra*: soup.

to buy myself an extra book. Meanwhile I should much like all the months to be hotter than the one which will soon be here, and also as short. I must confess that my life, in my fireless room up in the skies with the north wind which we are now having, is not exactly luxurious; but I have your dressing-gown which, by reminding me of your kindness, helps me to remember that you are still there to prevent me freezing to death. I sit on my bed, fold the blanket over my feet, prop myself up with the bolster, and work as well as if I were in M. de Lamartine's study.

Sisco will tell you if it is really warm in my room; but I don't mind; I am becoming hardened, I no longer suffer from the cold or feel greedy. What can't be cured must be endured. I have learnt to go without many little luxuries which, however, I shall be very glad to have again if ever I can do so.

Meanwhile, I send you by my dear Sisco, who is still rather too fond of lecturing me, a thousand kisses which you will please pass on to the rest of the family. From my room I can imagine I see those four venerable heads and Benedetta's madcap mouth fluttering from one to the other, kissing each in turn and thinking that, by so doing, she can make up for the absence of her brother who only loves her all the more for her kind thought.

Your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

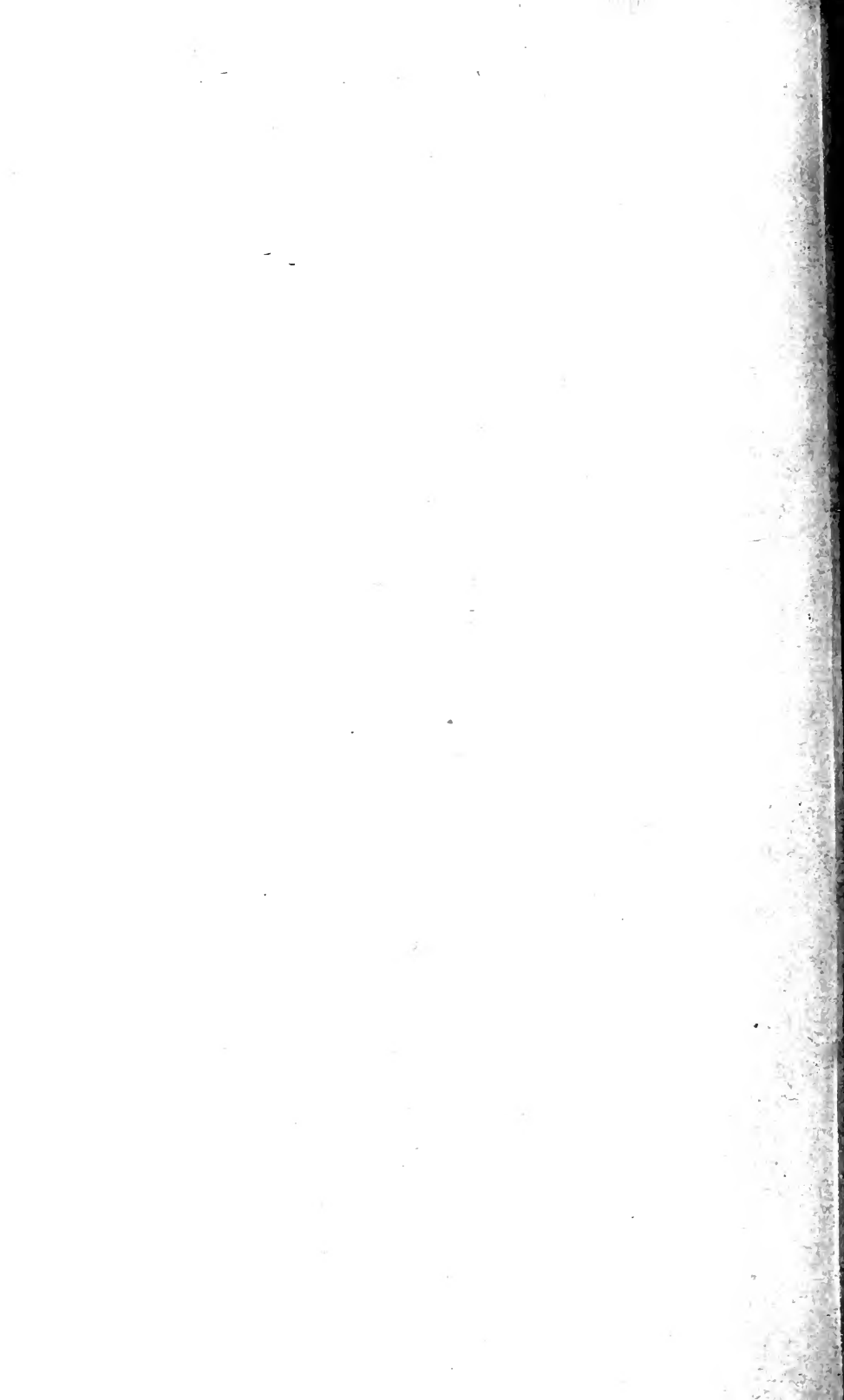
PARIS, *February 6, 1857.*

MY EXCELLENT FATHER,—I received your dear letter of the 31st of last month, which I cannot read or re-read without shedding tears over the last passages. Ah! yes, truly the affection of a father for his son has something so eloquent, so sublime, that one cannot express it better

than by consulting the feelings of one's own heart. I saw, what I knew already, that your fatherly affection for me could not fail. I was able to read what you, better than any other father, wish and know how to put into practice; that is to say, how to show yourself your son's father and friend. The friend, that is to say, the adviser and director, indulgence and truth personified. It is true (and your experience forces me to acknowledge it) that we are surrounded by false friends; but young people feel the need of a friend so acutely that, notwithstanding the knowledge, the experience of daily life, that is to say, the eternal repetition of Socrates' saying, "Nothing is more common than the name, nothing is more rare than the reality"—there is not a man who, notwithstanding the proverb and his own knowledge of human frailty, has not got a true friend, some one whose character resembles his own in several ways, whose heart feels and beats in unison with his. Each member of society owns one or two friends really worthy of the name, who are necessary to him to satisfy that craving for sympathy which torments the human soul and which is doubtless the cause of this long quest for a true friend. Before we find that friend, we search far and near, we knock at many a door, we study the question, we reflect, we meditate, and then, after taking no end of trouble, we discover that we have not made a friend but only an acquaintance. And we start off again on our quest until we find a heart like unto our own. But you, you can understand this better than any one else; to save me the trouble of searching, you ask me to be your friend. Oh! I cannot refuse you this precious friendship. I throw myself into your arms; I look to you to console me for all I have left behind me—courage to wait for what I



JOSEPH GAMBETTA,
Gambetta's Father



want; and I find consolation, strength, hope, and love in abundance. . . .

PARIS, *February 11, 1857.*

MY EXCELLENT FATHER,—It is midnight; I gladly leave the *code Napoléon*, because I am going to answer your letter, and it is so sweet to chat with the best of fathers, and (I must say it) with the wisest of parents. I have read, reflected, meditated over the two lines which you added at the end of your letter, and which were admirably succinct; I have been once more convinced of my cousin Galleano's good sense and cool judgment. But I must say one thing: I have proved what I suspected all along—he is tired of life. His life has been so full of trials and tragedies that his heart has withered and he has become a positivist. He wants solid proofs, irrefutable arguments, for he judges the future by past and present events. However, if I may be allowed to express an opinion and to try to prove that my ambitions are all for our mutual good, let me say that I desire fortune combined with common-sense, and hope, which is the manna upon which humanity feeds. The inimitable picture which he drew with a master's touch of the dear home life, of the calm family circle, of the dear ones whom Heaven has given me, is the most interesting as well as the most important part of his whole letter. May this delicious patriarchy (if I may be allowed to invent such a word) for long be preserved intact; and may God never deprive me of these treasures of affection and joy which the authors of his being owe to their child. Ah! no, if the future is kind to me, it must be especially kind to my parents; I shall lay my laurels at their feet and on their breasts; I shall attach myself to them for ever, to them alone; I shall gather them round me and find joy in their

affection ; such a future is probable and possible, and we have cause to believe that it may be realised. This is my cousin's way of thinking, or at least the pleasantest way of looking at the future ; the rest, I hope, is only dependent upon hard work and common-sense.

First of all, I will confess and lay down the principle that trade is the most profitable of all professions, and that, at twenty-one years of age, I shall be just as fit to take it up as I am now—that is quite certain : the rest is easily proved. For my studies are no longer more ornamental than useful ; I have learnt many useful, indispensable things, which will be of much help to me in the management and development of your business.

For while on one hand my studies become useful, on the other hand they pave the way to fame and even to fortune if the future will only smile sometimes upon me. Napoleon III., in his work upon artillery, is quite right when he says, "*One can master fate by work and force the future to obey one if that work is performed in an intelligent manner.*" At all events, I risk nothing, neither family ties, nor honour, nor fortune. And now we only have one point to settle and that is the question of independence. And yet that is a very knotty point, and the most difficult of all. In fact, we need to look very far afield to see that no one is independent, and that we all depend upon our neighbours, on circumstances, on ourselves, on everything ; in short, no one is independent although we are apparently free to do as we like. By free, I mean that every one has the right to do anything which is seemly and fit. So you cannot object to independence. One may say, and I am one of the first to allow it, that trade seems to give one more liberty ; and yet, if we think quietly and try to be honest with

ourselves and others, is it not the profession in which one is most dependent, in which one is obliged to flatter (if you will), the greatest number of opinions, ideas, persons, and characters, if one wishes to keep one's customers? It is true that, in compensation for this self-abasement, one earns money; but that is only the reward due to an honest man who, like you, dear father, has been sharp enough and intelligent enough to make a position for his children, a position for which I thank you with all my heart and soul. I consider your conduct, your whole life beyond all praise; for you have earned everything by your natural talents; you began with nothing, yet, thanks to you and my good mother, our future is assured. Your training has laid the *foundations* of a good law student in me. It is my duty to do the rest, although you, in your kindness, told me in your last letter that you would help me if I were good. Oh! one ought to say to the son with regard to his father, "Learn to help yourself, and then your father will help you!" For the father represents Providence and God to his child! But I am wandering from my subject, so I will hasten back to it. I was talking of independence, and I was saying that, in my opinion (for you, with your usual good sense, must have already guessed that it was only my opinion), if I managed to obtain, as I hope to do, one of those much-sought-after posts, where eloquence and knowledge earn consideration and respect, I should be the freest of all men, because I should only have to obey one person, whom I should seldom meet and then only by chance, the minister of justice; that, therefore, I should be allowed the greatest liberty of action and opinion and only be obliged to answer for my conduct to one person and not to a number of unknown and very often impolite

people. In this case I should be much more independent for I should only have to bow to the wishes of one person, whereas, if I were in business, I should have to obey an unlimited number of persons, so that is an advantage as far as independence goes. I think that was how I argued with my cousin Galleano who, it is true, can be very reasonable, very matter of fact, very clever, and very kind as well as very unselfish, but who sees things in rather too gloomy a light; like all men who, by reason of a life of hard work, have aged before their time, his advice is too mixed with bitterness and distaste for the ideal things of life, and he cannot see matters in the same light as I see them.

I hope you will think over my proposal, dear father, that you will understand and will weigh my reasons, that you will impart them to mama, to my uncle, and to Sisco if you like, and that you will not refuse in your next letter to send a kiss to your beloved son, who throws his arms round your neck and begs you to kiss all the family for him—that is to say, the younger and the older members of the family.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *February 17, 1857.*

MY EXCELLENT FATHER,—What ineffable pleasure your sweet letter caused me! I was touched by your resignation and your kindness. Ah! indeed, when the heart speaks, inspiration always comes to our aid and we find the power to express our feelings. And your letter was so beautiful that I learnt it by heart; but on reading for the first time those lines in which you depict with such a delicate touch the anchor of salvation, which, like an old sailor, your fatherly hands have cast into the ocean of the future—all those lines, in short,

which breathe of what our ancestors rightly called paternal piety, filial piety made my eyes fill with tears.

The picture which you paint of my career as a student and of the long vigils of study is very gloomy; but determination and application overcome all obstacles and soon reach the goal—yes, soon! For if I do not reach it soon, be assured that I shall not allow you to wear yourself out with hard work unaided by me. You say that you despair of seeing my efforts result in anything. Oh! you speak from the parent's point of view, not from conviction. No one knows whither we are going, and a few short years sometimes suffice to perfect a career. However, I shall always have trade to fall back upon. If I abandon my present occupation I shall still have the right to go back to business. For I did not leave home because I hated the idea of going into business. That would indeed have been foolish. For trade is the cement which holds a State together, the pulse of all political bodies. It is commerce which brings nations into contact with each other, not to speak of individuals; so it follows that commerce is one of the causes of legislature. And, as M. de Portalis, one of France's greatest juris-consults, said in 1799, "*The compass revealed the world to us, commerce has made it sociable.*"

I should always be proud of being in trade, no matter what that trade might be, and I should prefer to enter the business which you, in your kindness, have prepared for me. I should be very narrow-minded if I despised that walk in life, but I must confess that narrow-minded people and low-minded people abound; they shrug their shoulders at the name of grocer. But the cause of this detestable conduct my cousin Galleano, with his wonder-

ful perception and experience, explains: it is envy combined with false pride. My cousin Galleano, like all men who have run through life at full speed from their birth (as Mme. de Sévigné would have said), who have aged prematurely, knows mankind and—terrible effect of this knowledge!—despises his fellow-men and is accustomed to look for evil instead of good.

But I am not answering your letter and I am telling you very little. You ask me some details concerning my mode of life and my lodging. I gladly throw open my hall-door to you. It will seem to me as if I were showing you my house, which in reality is not so bad after all; but I will refrain from asking you to sit down at my table, for it is too bad for anything. But I must be contented. Do your duty, come what may. So you see, here we have a room thirteen feet square, ornamented with a clock which never goes and never has gone; a chest of drawers, the drawers of which can only be opened with the greatest difficulty; an armchair which was once crimson and soft and is now colourless and hard; a bed which is fairly good, for when I lie down upon it I am usually very sleepy; a grate in which I never make a fire, because I can't afford it; but the weather is pretty good for Paris. Then the Emperor Napoleon warms the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève and me too from ten o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night. I forgot to tell you that my room is provided with a dressing-room, where I do very little dressing. My room has one serious drawback for a gentleman who, like the hall-porter of an hôtel once said to M. de Lamartine, requires plenty of light and air. One cannot see very well in it at mid-day; that is to say, the sun, which Paris never sees during three

hundred and sixty-five days in the year, does not peep in to wish me a good morning. Otherwise my room is very nice, very cheap, and kept by honest folk; I much suspect that I owe to M. Sisco the fact that I have such an inexpensive and sumptuous abode. So sumptuous, do you say? Yes, dear father, I forgot to tell you that I have a mirror and red window-curtains, which make the room as much lighter as that little instrument called an extinguisher placed on the wick of a candle makes it shine brighter. Ah! what a silly fellow I am! You see that I have not drowned my lightheartedness in the waters of the Seine—which reminds me that I must now describe my meals to you.

Ah! that is the worst part of the whole affair; I make a very frugal breakfast—oh! the most frugal breakfast any one can imagine; it consists of a roll, value one sou. On Sunday I treat myself to two rolls. I must also tell you that if I wake early, at six o'clock in the morning, I get up late, at eleven o'clock or twelve; and then, by virtue of a mental process called abstraction, or in business terms and in arithmetic subtraction, I act as if I had only been awake since eleven or twelve; I drink a glass of water and I go and attend different lectures until half-past four. At five I dine, and I don't know what I eat; but that does not matter. I then pay 17, 18, or 20 sous, go out, buy a little roll for 1 sou, and return to the *Bibliothèque*. At eleven o'clock I eat my roll, which I sop in water. I am not yet sufficiently advanced along the road of salvation to water it with the sweat of my brow, and then winter prevents that operation; but we shall see what happens in July or towards the end of August. You see that I have taken your advice; I am steady, orderly—very orderly—over my

work, for that is the only luxury I allow myself. You can count upon me and be sure that I shall cause neither you nor myself any trouble. I love myself and I love you too much to do that. . . .

And now I must drop my pen; I seem to see you seated under the tall poplars gazing into the green distance! I feel so exactly as if I were at Cahors that I can smell the perfumed banks of the river. I will not open the window to a pale sunbeam which has come to play a moment before it expires, and yet I would gladly mount upon it and fly to join you. But I hasten to make the best of this passing gleam, although I cannot help envying you your warm fires.

Adieu! and may you be happy.

GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *March 4, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—I received your letter, which, like all those which you write me, rejoiced my heart; but this one more than any other rejoiced my mind. I watched with pleasure your fatherly heart unfold itself in your letter, and I saw that you trusted me notwithstanding the bitter experience acquired each day. No doubt, as you remark with your usual good sense, men are very foolish only to listen to the advice of well-known people; for with this way of proceeding it would soon be impossible to fill the gaps caused by death in the literary world. But we are, however, very often forced to abandon this system; wiser persons than ourselves make it their duty to show us that there are other writers worthy of our notice and blow the newcomers' trumpets, if I may be allowed to use this expression. But, as you say, hope and orderly habits, helped by courage, always lead one to the haven where one would

be. However, *my* haven is behind me; at the first blast of the tempest I shall tack and fly back to port. You, my good pilot, you foresee the coming storm and keep a shelter for me. So, as you say in that beautiful Italian language, in the language of the gods, "*Avanti! avanti!*" My heart always begins to beat violently when I read your letters. Your fatherly love for me touches me and makes me feel inclined to weep for joy. So what a touching attention it was on your part to send me your watch; it will be an endless source of encouragement to me to do well, and it will prove to me that you yourself have been successful. I can understand better than any one, no doubt, that you do not want to part with your money; and I shall consider it my duty only to accept from you such sums as you can really afford to give me without damaging that magnificent commercial edifice built up by the sweat of your brow, by your thrift, and especially by your cleverness. And what I now say of your efforts to enable me to get on in the world reminds me of the privations which my good mother must have suffered for my sake. Her example will make me braver.

Besides, I have but little fear for the future. Sisco is here; I am not afraid of him because he is almost like a member of the family. And he is so tactful in all he does that I cannot take offence, no matter what he says or does. He comes to see me pretty often; I dine with him every Sunday, and on Thursdays also if I like. But he does me other kindnesses; and if I had not promised to say nothing about the matter, or rather if I did not know how he tries to be useful to me in every way, I should have already told you all about it.

But I was forgetting to thank you for your kind thought in sending me some postage stamps. In fact,

I had come to the end of mine ; you count very well and I am delighted to use them in your service.

Since you advised me to do so, and since you told M. Sisco to speak to me upon the matter, I have given up working late at night. I sleep well and I shall soon feel much better. I am now quite well up in my different subjects and I have some spare time in which to study other things which may be useful to me in the future. I must have an innate gift for Italian, for I understand it perfectly well although I have never studied it.

As soon as Galleano writes to me, I shall try to send him a few Italian phrases in reply. You would do well to send me his address and to tell me if I must prepay the letter.

What a good thing your legs are so strong! The legs are the foundation of the human body: it is important to take care of them and one too often sees sailors inclined to neglect them. I congratulate you on having had the determination to conquer your inability to walk; your life will be prolonged and more agreeable to you. I send you my love and kisses.

Your devoted son, LÉON.

N.B.—A thousand kisses for Benedetta.

PARIS, *March 25, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—His father's consent is usually the most solid foundation upon which a young man ought to build his future; but when to this consent is united a still more precious quality, the promise of a golden future blessed by family affection and hope, the value is enhanced. So I cannot tell you how delighted I was to hear that you approved of my method

of studying and of my studies themselves. I am playing high ; but even if I lose, I shall still be able to find a calm, happy retreat, thanks to my guardian angel. I am the gambler, you are the guardian angel. So it is only right that I should prove my gratitude whenever an occasion to do so arises ; I should be happy to include my cousin Giacomo Galleano whose address, thanks to you, I now have and to whom I am going to write. I will let you know what I say and what he says in reply. I shall write in Italian, for which language I have conceived quite a passion since reading Alfieri, whom I heard explained, praised, and blamed by a professor at the Collège de France. Ah ! how you would have enjoyed that lecture ! You would have been so pleased to see all those young fellows applauding and showing how they love and sympathise with Italy. I was seated beside Montanelli, formerly a Roman dictator in 1848. It was five o'clock in the afternoon and the setting sun was still peeping through the windows of the hall in which from four to five thousand young men were standing and sitting. A man was speaking ; his face, which was thoroughly southern in type, was the face of a born orator ; his bright black eyes wandered from one face to another trying to enlist the sympathies of his audience. His mouth remained half-open when he was not speaking ; and when he did speak, it was like a stream of fire burning the channel along which it flows. His expressive head was covered with very white and very long hair, and the pale sun shone on his silvery curls. The scene was worthy of Raphael's brush. He was explaining one of Alfieri's tragedies : "*Brutus assassinating Caesar*," *una tragedia di libertà*, as Alfieri himself called it ; he was the first

political author in his fatherland to rouse it to fight for unity; the nation would not hearken to him. It stayed as it was, as it is still to-day, a beautiful woman in the clutches of barbarous and ferocious tyrants. The lecture was just going to end when the professor cried: "Gentlemen, although what I am going to say does not belong to the province of literature, I cannot resist a feeling which rises in my heart and forces me to give utterance to it. The works of Alfieri were powerless to bring back liberty and unity to the land of Italy. The sun of Rome and of Naples continues to shine on slaves. And tyranny has grown stronger in our days. Alfieri did well to die. Ah! gentlemen, cry with me: 'O Italy! we send to thee our regrets, our sympathy, our hopes!'"

The whole hall rose, there was silence for a minute; we were all touched and deeply affected. The silence was the silence of admiration. Then Montanelli cried, "*Questa voce sia notita, è d'un gran cuore.*"* When we had recovered ourselves we loudly applauded, and the professor left the hall amid the acclamations of all the young men then present. I realised that Italy and France were two sisters, separated and kept apart by a ferocious master. That master is ambition and despotism made man—we know who that man is.

I propose to write all this to Galleano: I am sure that it would please him. I shall be content if I can remove one of his reasons for hating France. . . .

I beg you to make my sister learn by heart every morning, never at night, a page of poetry or prose which she must then recite to you. This study is most

* "May this wish be remembered, for it comes from a great heart!"

advantageous ; first, it will develop the memory which is one of our most precious possessions, and then it will embellish her mind which is well adapted for this exercise, for I think she has very good taste. In short, it will help to form her style of composition and her handwriting, and at the same time it will enable her to repeat, from time to time, on the banks of some river, on the summit of some mountain, the verses of our best poets. I beg you to do this, in your own name and in the name of my affection for you who first instilled into my heart the love of history, poetry, and study. I well remember how, when I was still a child, it was you who answered all my questions, advised me to learn pages of history or short passages from our best authors, because you enjoyed hearing me repeat them during our walks. I love to taste this pleasant memory as a wine-taster loves to smell some rich wine at the bottom of its old dust-covered bottle. Your beloved son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *April 6*, 1857.

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—Yesterday I saw M. Capré who gave me your letter, your watch, and the sum of money which you had put aside for me. Of these three gifts, the money is not the most valuable ; the nature of the gift is far above its value, and never have I been better able to explore the labyrinth of tender affections which can, and often does, exist between father and son ! You send me your watch ! that is to say : a perfect treasure-house of memories, lessons, advice, resources ; when I wear it, I shall feel as if it were one of the companions of your youth, who is telling me all about your long life of hard work and spurring me on to prove

myself worthy of my father ! It will be a shield also, for it will warn me of what I ought to do ; it will tell me, it will cry to me in its silvery little voice, "*Noblesse oblige*" : the nobility of courage, endeavour, duty, honesty ; and to this advice, to this encouragement, it will add hope ; its very presence will be a powerful example of what a strong, steady man, constantly struggling with adversity, can do if he is intelligent. In a word, it means that you will be nearer to me. When I look at its face with the steel hand moving round slowly but surely, I think of your affection and your care for me, as constant and as vigilant as time itself. Truly nothing could have given me more pleasure ; it is like a treasure-house of family souvenirs which I evoke and which, by reminding me of the past, force me to think of the future. The future ! "Time is money," say the Americans, the most punctual nation in the whole world. Be assured that it shall never leave me, nay ! more, the poor little thing shall never find itself a stranger in a foreign land ! It has only changed its abode from one floor to another ; it has come down to the ground floor, but it will always beat on the same heart.

I thank you for the present of money which you sent me ; if you only knew how grateful I am to you ; and if you knew how your kindness is like spring-water to a parched tongue ! Just as it happened, I had to enter my name for next term on the 8th ; and so you see, your fatherly forethought for me has made me happy, and I shall ever be grateful to you for it. I am going to write to Galleano as you remind me to do ; however, although you may tell me that I am prejudiced in his favour, I must tell you that I thought your letter contained one very sapient remark concerning his character. I mean

where you say, "He has bought his experience in the fashionable world; *and as truth is not found there, he might be mistaken sometimes!*"

These remarks slip out quite naturally; they show that you are highly and habitually observant; but for me whose profession it is, so to speak, to search for good deeds and good words accomplished and uttered by my fellow-men, I am obliged to gather up such remarks when I happen to come across them. A moralist might be proud of having made this remark. Perhaps he would be prouder of it than you are. But whose fault is that? . . .

I did not see Italy in the springtime; I saw it just at the very best moment. Summer had gone, autumn was already on the wane, and winter had not yet put in an appearance, and yet all four seasons seemed commingled. The sea was rough, the sky leaden; the leaves were beginning to fall; the Alps were covered with snow, and yet the scenery was wonderfully verdant and poetical. But in spring, when the sea is neither calm like a lake nor terrible and terrifying like a tornado, but when it gently heaves and tosses like a restless child, when its capricious waves tear to and fro like a flock of lambs in a newly-mown meadow, when the sky is now red, now blue, when every plant exhales sweet perfume, when the orange-trees are in bloom, the jasmines and the fruit-trees budding, all nature seems to grow younger and to be lighter hearted, then the picture is poetical in the extreme, and God, or a heaven-born artist like Raphael or Albani, is alone worthy to frame such exquisite beauty!

Let us hope that these warm breezes will make our good mother's blood course more swiftly through her

veins, and that many a year will pass before she goes to take her place in another paradise. That is my wish ; yours is perhaps even more ardent, although it cannot be more sincere—death has perhaps forgotten her ; let her make the best of this forgetfulness, and let us go and see her very often. A German poet once said, “The young make us feel as if we were living our lives over again. . . .”

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *April 28, 1857.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I received your letter April 21st ; it must have crossed mine which M. Bousquet brought to show you. I had the sweet consolation of being able to chat with three men whom I really love : first, I read your letter, which was like precious balm to me, for I knew that your sorrow* had given place to resignation, that you had seen that this world is but a huge graveyard, and our present life a pilgrimage towards a land of endless glory. I do not know, but it seems to me that her death has afflicted me less than you—meditation is the soul's salvation. “Would you stop my tears?” said a poet ; “nay ! let them flow still faster !” Tears are bitter and soon satiate us. So what joy, what grief did I not experience on reading those letters from Galleano and M. Roscoano, for they expressed everything in a few words. I knew that she would bid farewell to life with all the calmness of a queen who says to her weeping handmaidens, “It is not difficult to die !” I was glad to hear that they had given her such a splendid funeral. I blessed the good folk from the bottom of my heart. *Celle* shall be another link in the chain of love which binds me to Italy.

* Léon Gambetta's grandmother had just died at *Celle-Ligure*.

I see that you sent to Galleano the letter which I wrote to you. Doubtless you did well; however, it was not worth sending over the frontier. When I write, father, I write what I feel; I don't think of what the *Académie* would say; I think, I cease to speak; I draw, I paint with my pen; I let my heart speak for itself without regard to the size of the canvas. I don't bother myself about grammar; I like to be vague; it is more affectionate and more natural. I shall always refrain from re-touching my letters to you; they would only seem affected if I did so. But you are rather rash to send them to Galleano, for they may be ungrammatical. Not that I need fear that he will judge them harshly from a grammatical point of view—far from it: he is too affectionate to let a few faults influence his opinion of me; he is so intelligent that he will easily guess that these letters come straight from the heart. Life is not conducted on geometrical lines, and love is life. So I write to you because I want to live, not to indulge in rhetoric. Little do I care for any prying idiots who may happen to read them; and yet they would not shame the most punctilious grammarian; and so I repeat, "Long live Love and may the devil take the grammar!" Good grammar and law reports have nothing to do with grief and poetry.

Cahors must now be opening its eyes to the beams of the spring sun; I know few places more picturesque in every way. I remember it with much affection, and it sometimes seems to me as if I were walking arm-in-arm with you on its bleak hills. Courage! those days will return. God is great; He holds the future in His hands. Let us pray and hope.

I am expecting a letter from my sister; the month

has elapsed; you say little or nothing about her, nor of mama who, as well as my aunt, must miss me a tiny bit. Is your garden growing gay with the daisies of spring? Are the roses opening their crimson buds? Are the orange-trees and verbenas scenting your rooms? Is the hot-house well stocked with flowers? Has the vine begun to bud? Do the cherry-trees and apricots give Benedetta reason to hope that she will soon be able to feast off their fruit? Do the pear-trees show their clusters of white blossoms? Has the sweet basil popped up its little green head all ready for the heartless cook to tear off and plunge into the *menestra* with its golden bubbles? Has the world grown young again? Does nature smile? Are you happy, or do you still cry? Dry your tears: a newly created saint watches over us; it is time to be happy again!

Tell me all about my home; this domestic poetry wafted across France from the banks of the Lot will sink into my heart and make me love more and more the father who writes and the dear ones whom he describes.

So, dear father, you see that I treat you as if you were only a paid writer at so much a line. I almost command you: write! write! I am authorised to do so: first by your love for me and my love for you; then by [the distance, and our mutual pleasure; and I finish with a filial kiss and the hope of a speedy reward in the shape of a reply. Your devoted son, LÉON GAMBETTA.

PS.—Your watch goes like the clock outside the Bourse; I can tell the time to a second, it is quite a reformed character. I can remember how, in my old schooldays, it used to gallop through an hour in forty-five minutes, or else take two hours to get through one.

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Lighting is cheap; I go to bed by the light of the gas-lamp which is just under my window; this municipal lamp is delightfully economical.

PARIS, *May 23, 1857.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—I cannot refrain any longer either from writing to you or from putting pen to paper. As I write my room is flooded by the beautiful spring sunshine. I salute the sun, for it is the father of nature; it comes every day to shed its light on the just and the unjust; it is the expression of inexhaustible goodness; it is the eye of God gazing down upon, and fertilising the world at its feet. There is a strange and charming similarity between the father and the sun, these two kings of two worlds; one has its throne in matter, the other is worshipped on the altar of the heart. The love of a father for his children is like a gardener's care for his garden; the father watches over each plant, and his smile beautifies and gladdens the inhabitants of that garden. I love to let my thoughts wander away with the golden rays which dance in my room; I sometimes follow one of those rays; little by little I become one with it, and then I remember that this same sun shines on you at Cahors, that perhaps you are looking at it and that perhaps you see a misty phantom which is no other than your Léon. I am happy then, and it seems to me as if our hearts were beating in unison and as if we were floating in that lovely light, freed from our bodies. I am in you and you are in me. Oh! how I wish this dream could last longer! But my eye tires watching the diamond ray. When I have passed my law examinations, I mean to earn some money during the holidays for next winter, and to enter a printer's office for two or three

months as reader of Greek proofs; I have already made inquiries and I think I shall be able to find what I want. This sort of work is badly paid, but there is no rose without a thorn: I shall have to work ten hours a day, for which I shall get 6 francs, and even 10 francs, if I give satisfaction. What do you think about the matter? I should be glad to hear your opinion. I have told no one, not even Sisco, who is counting upon having me with him for the holidays. But I prefer to earn my winter overcoat.

I have been expecting to have a letter from you; I dare say I shall soon get one, so I tell myself to be patient. My health is just the same. I am very contented, notwithstanding a vague uncertainty as to the future; but courage soon returns, and with it hope, "that blessing which God sends to mankind," as Voltaire said.

The country must be looking beautiful at Cahors just now; the vines must be budding, the corn swinging on the stalk and turning yellow; the mountains, so bare and black in winter, must be growing green like a lawn in a park, and the green and red waters of the Lot must be winding about at their feet. Do you think of taking any baths this year? I strongly advise you to do so. Your good health dates from your new habit of swimming; for you are really and truly growing younger instead of older.

It goes without saying that Sisco sends you his best love. And then he must have answered your letter. He is always punctual, especially with you. He has Bazancourt's "History of the War in the East," and he offers to send it to you. I am looking through it: I can get through more in a quarter of an hour than he can read in

a fortnight; it is not to be wondered at. The book is well written and contains some rather original ideas, but it is full of fulsome praise of our Army and our Emperor which I am far from approving. Ah! Paris is a strange place! I will tell you more when I see you again and can touch your lips with mine. Your son and friend,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *June 9, 1857.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I hasten to reply to your dear letter. Once again you prove your affection, your friendship both as a father and as a man. I am lucky to find friends in my parents, and such friends! my equals, and not haughty and irrational despots as one often sees around one: French fathers tyrannise over their children one day and spoil them the next.

I am rather glad that my friends have told you how hard I am working; but don't imagine that I have not time to observe and to muse over the future. The day is near. We are dancing on the top of a volcano. In 1848 the Revolution spread over the Alps from France into Italy. To-day it will come from beyond those mountains, and it will carry all before it. I wrote to Galleano yesterday and so I feel cheerful; the hour for the new order of things is going to strike.

Italy is in travail; France is awaking to political life; the dawn is coming; let us wait until the day breaks.

I wish I could read the future. It must be so beautiful! Ah! father, congratulate yourself, we shall soon see some fine doings. The time is near. Although the present Government may jog on for two more years, by the end of that time it will have got to

the end of its tether; and ruined by extravagance and *coups d'état*, it will succumb to the very first blow from the nation's arm. What important questions will have to be settled! What new and necessary theories propounded! What noble plans, what vast enterprises, what glorious victories! For we must succeed: our opinions are the daughters of a painful past; they are big with a promising future; they must eventually give birth to the happiness of mankind. But first they must be developed by study; education must widen their knowledge; men must make them known, and every one must respect and honour them. May the world become one huge school, where man shall be his brother's teacher, whence race prejudices, selfishness, ambition, cupidity, indifference, and hatred are banished in order to make room for cosmopolitanism, love, disinterestedness, equality, noble aspirations, and charity. . . .

One science alone shall be taught, political economy; one altar alone shall be erected, humanity; one principle alone, order; one society alone, the world!

It is a magnificent idea, but genius is powerless to realise it; it can only show the way; liberty and enthusiasm must do the rest.

Liberty, seated in the centre of the spiritual world, can only be approached by passing through a wide avenue—the avenue of progress.

But you will smile, perhaps; I am too impetuous, it is true. But the people suffer so that I may be excused if my feelings are sometimes too much for me.

I was speaking just now of political economy; I had a strange encounter while attending a lecture on this subject. Since the beginning of the year I have always

occupied the same seat beside the same person. There are about twelve of us at this lecture, which is given at the Collège de France. They are all elderly men; I am the only young one.

My neighbour was a man of fifty or sixty years of age, thin, distinguished-looking, with an intelligent head and a grizzly beard. This gentleman asked me some question concerning political economy. I at once saw that he knew very little about the matter. I explained the theory at length to him; he thanked me, and after having had a long chat with me, he asked me who I was and what I was doing in Paris. I told him my name and my profession. At the name of Gambetta, I saw his expression soften; he asked after all my family and told me that his name was Larroque, and that he was formerly rector of the academy of Cahors. Good-bye for the present. I embrace you. LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, June 10, 1857.

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—I must now reply to one of your kind letters, the kindest among so many kind ones: I did not reply at once to it, because I had to interview M. M. Alexandre for you. I must tell you, dear father, that I thought it best, before taking any steps in the matter, to ask the advice of the bandmaster of the *garde impériale*; and in this I was aided by Sisco who is always there when I want help. This excellent musician told me that Alexandre's organs and harmoniums are the best one can find for the money—and that no sooner does one try a 100-franc harmonium, than one immediately wants to buy a bigger one. I then asked him if he thought that this instrument could take the place of the piano and if it was easier to learn. He

replied that a good musician would prefer the organ and the harmonium to the piano, but that for beginners, and especially for young ladies, it was best to make them begin their musical studies with the piano.

Since then I have thought the matter over, and I have come to the conclusion that you had much better buy a piano than a harmonium. But I saw that there was a great difference in the price, and so I said to myself that I would write to you to ask if you would not prefer to wait a little to see if I could not pick up a second-hand piano somewhere, both good and ornamental as one so often finds in Paris. And then supposing we could not find one, which is not probable, we could go back to the organ; but I think we shall find one, and then we can get the bandmaster of the *garde impériale* to try it for us; for such a piano would be both cheap and useful for acquiring a wider knowledge of music.

You, also, must think over the matter and write me your decision. I can see you, having found a place for it in your room, against the wall to the left on entering, beside the mantelpiece, close to which I see you seated after supper enjoying a cigar while Benedetta sings you a Venetian barcarole—

“Andare sul mare
Con Vergine santa,”

and other airs which waft the scent of the Italian sea to you across the keys of the piano. . . .

I was forgetting your kindness. I was forgetting? No, no, I had not forgotten, I omitted to mention that my father had asked me to come to him. So I am coming to see you, to bask in the air, the sunshine, among the flowers and poetry, with you, mama, and all

the others. That salutary douche of family affection always leaves me stronger and younger. I have often thought of our meeting. I have already in imagination told you everything I know, all I have seen, all I can remember, all I think, shall think, and shall do. Oh! what bliss! I need my father's heart, like a huge urn, deep as the ocean, to contain it all. Adrien Bosquet wrote to tell me that you were beginning to take up the flageolet again. I am delighted to hear it. I think I told him that I felt uncertain as to whether you would be able to manage your scales.

But what do scales matter to you? Does the nightingale know anything about the rudiments of music? Neither the wind, nor the tempest, nor the echo, nor anything in nature, know the meaning of diapason, or the rules of plain-song, and yet they are harmonious, well-attuned, beautiful, because art is unknown to them, and feeling and God are everywhere. Every man's heart is filled with divine, inexpressible music, which the soul alone can hear; 'tis a hidden lyre whose strings are the affections of that heart and whose keys are truth and reason. Only the man, to whom it is given to hear this music, is pure. And if there is a pure man on the face of this earth, that man is you; for you are a pure father of a family, a pure citizen, pure in everything and everywhere. Be happy, then, oh! my father! Sing and don't bother your head about scales and quavers. Art is represented by crinolines, trowsers, and top-hats; nature is mankind and womankind, a human head with eyes and features made to gaze up into the heavens, and there to search for the haven which lies at the end of our earthly pilgrimage. But space fails me. I leave you and return to my *code civil* which I persist in re-

fusing to call the *code Napoléon*. I long to be able to kiss you all again.

Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, June 23, 1857.

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—. . . Quercy shall serve me as an excuse for changing the subject. I want to tell you about the elections. Has Cavaignac's popularity really become a thing of the past? He had a good majority in Paris; and if we could have seen the contents of the ballot-boxes, I think we should have found that it was even greater; but modern politicians care little for *la scienza di abbacco*.*

I think, however, that Cavaignac will get the better of the candidate for the Government, and here are my reasons for thinking so. Cahors is a town where politics are pretty fairly divided: legitimists and democrats divide the territory between them. Therefore they ought all to have agreed amongst themselves to consider Cavaignac as an opposition signal and not as the representative of any particular party.

Paris has been very excited lately; and really I am obliged to acknowledge that it is indeed the centre, the heart of France! What uneasiness I see around me! Political life, that life the pulsations of which are so strong and regular, has been restored to one million men; they discussed, advised, harangued, placarded their speeches, spoke their opinions for and against such and such a motion; it was just as if an electric shock had resuscitated those who died before '89.

And the opposition party did not get the best of it; but its soldiers retreated in excellent order; the minority

* *Scienza di abbacco*: the science of arithmetic.

was sufficiently imposing to let people see that when our little band no longer has to fight against crass selfishness, we shall win the day. But the thing which impressed me most was the audacity of this man: he actually dared to appeal to the most redoubtable element, he dared to oppose a principle, in order to violate that principle perhaps, and to take back with one hand what he gave with the other. The unhappy creature! His eyes are growing dim, his head is dizzy; but does he not know that the opposition party in France announces its arrival one hour, is already biting and struggling by the second hour, and wins the battle almost before that second hour has elapsed?

Place in face of a true and universally acknowledged principle a corrupt civilisation, a false and arbitrary state of affairs, and it can only be a question of time. He has ascended the summit of evil by that so-called stepping-stone—universal suffrage; when that stepping-stone slips, he is bound to fall. But what will he care? Will he not have suffered for ten years when, for ten years, every one thought him happy—which, in my opinion, is the most horrible of all tortures? But great offenders deserve great punishments.

Believe me, trust in France and in Italy; for you love both countries equally well and the Alps do not exist for your sympathetic heart; your brothers live on one side, your children on the other. *Dio è grande.* I embrace you,

Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *June 30, 1857.*

You cannot be ill; something would have warned me. And then the sun of our country is so beneficent, so

powerful, so golden, that it vivifies and restores youth to the old. I can therefore only attribute your silence to the climate, to that *dolce far niente, tanta bella cosa con sole di paese*. Yes, I lay all the blame on the innocent sky of my native land: lucky people always do that; if something does not go quite right with them, they always lay the blame on the heavens. It would seem as if it were better to rail at the stars than at oneself. Self-love demands such conduct, and can one do better than imitate such an example?

The rain has ceased in Paris: M. Médard, the patron-saint of the dealers in umbrellas and goloshes, has decided to put away his water-pot—probably because he has emptied all the water out of it. We are now enjoying tropical sunshine with 40 or 50 degrees of heat; in Paris the changes of temperature are something phenomenal; we dance about from freezing to torrid heat, from one pole to another; it is the most capricious climate which ever came out of Pandora's box. . . .

I have now quite recovered from my feverish attack; I have had my hair cut Mérovée or Clodion fashion, which at first seemed very strange and was probably the cause of my fever. I count the days and I shall be delighted when I get to the end of my reckoning. I don't know whether to travel *viâ* Limoges or Bordeaux. Which is the cheapest route? I shall make inquiries. Sisco will probably come and join me after the Satory manœuvres, in the month of November or towards the end of October. We are still at it: *ad majorem dei gloriam*. Glory is a strange thing! No two men have ever been able to agree as to the meaning of that word! No one has ever been able to analyse glory—which shows that it only exists in weak minds. If I were ill, I should

want to get well—I detest incurables. And France, the most backward country in the whole world after Oceania, can produce no less than three million incurables. I thought that M. Achille Bessière would have stood for the *Corps législatif*; he ought to have done so. As things go nowadays, I think he would have been the only man worthy of representing our department which seems to consider it an honour to elect the stupidest candidates it can find. One can hardly mention their names without laughing and shrugging one's shoulder's. . . .

PARIS, *July 17, 1857.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just returned from the funeral of Béranger, the only *man* in France who remained to be buried. This morning the prefect of the police posted up an announcement forbidding any persons *desirous of making a noise or creating disturbances* to attend. So there was no one to carry the pall. There were four or five mourning-coaches with nobody inside. This imposing procession was guarded by three rows of guards, troopers, infantry, and a sprinkling of policemen. In short, it was exactly like a procession of ammunition-wagons passing through the enemy's camp. Regiments of soldiers were encamped in all the chief arteries of Paris. And then, when all these forces were displayed, nothing happened! But without these severe measures, there would have been a great deal of . . . But, hush! there are spies in every corner. I was there, and the devil himself would not have made me open my mouth. I said not a word, as you may imagine. But not one of Béranger's friends—no, not a single fellow worth his salt—would follow him to his last resting-place; for it

is a shameful thing to make death an occasion for exercising tyranny and repression.

I have received the 5-franc piece. This little gift is a proof of your talent for business, and I thank you for it. It represents your profits; and I am proud of my position when I see around me so many students, more or less well to do, who owe their wealth to usury and infamy.

The examinations take place the day after to-morrow; they are always a nuisance because they are so ridiculous; however, I look upon them as a bridge which every one has to cross.

I shall start as soon as the examinations are over, and as soon as you send me the necessary funds and something over to buy some indispensable articles of attire.

Please tell M. Barancy that I have found Jean Jouglas, now a corporal in the 91st regiment, still my friend although only a trooper, encamped on the Boulevard Beaumarchais, in order to protect the Empire against Béranger's works.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *July 22, 1857.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I hasten to reply to your kind letter received this morning in which I found the money for my journey and other expenses. I am, in fact, quite out at elbows; I really need to go home to my family; I have been too long without my aunt's brushings and mendings; my shoes are the same which I took away with me from Cahors; daily attention and Jacquard's Polish help to keep them decent. I hope to earn a few sous at the end of this month which will enable me to buy a new pair of polished leather boots for Cahors. However, my ambition is not limited to these

articles, and I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for all your kindness. Let us trust in God who will reward you in your business career until I can do so; for, rest assured, I shall do so some day. During the holidays I shall have the ineffable pleasure of being able to unfold the future to you. . . . I don't think that Galleano can have got our letters; for I have lately met some students from Piedmont who have received no letters for *a whole month*. And then he is naturally so prudent, I do not think he would write anything dangerous or imprudent; the intention would, no doubt, be praiseworthy; but he, better than any one else, realises that the day has not come yet.

You have always understood noble pride, the pride of an honest man; you do not wish to have to pay interest on any loans, and then you do not wish any one to know what my position is in Paris: you are right. I can assure you that no one has the least idea of the truth; they think I am the son of Rothschild II. I thank you for your kind intentions, and I am in despair at having to apply to you for help; for I consider it my duty to save you spending anything more on my education than is absolutely necessary. But necessity knows no law. I am going up for my examinations on the 31st inst. at half-past eight o'clock in the morning. I will write to you between this and then, and I will let you know the result on the day of the examinations. Only trust: it will be good. Sisco begs me to send you his love. He is going to the camp at Satory, but he will come to us in October. He is very tired of being on duty, and he longs to retire. I hope he will do so while the present ministry is still at the head of affairs; for, otherwise. . . .

PARIS, *August 1, 1857.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Yesterday I passed my law examinations; as I had hoped, I finished the year splendidly. I trust, however, that if I am still more methodical in my work, I shall do even better next year.

I had three white balls, which mean *very good*. There are only three examiners for these examinations.

I long to be back home again and to kiss you all. I shall reach Cahors on the 8th or the 9th, and then our long talks will begin again and I shall be able to tell you everything which one cannot put down in black and white. . . .

Léon Gambetta was always a great optimist; we will not reproduce the short notes in which he asks his father to increase his slender allowance: for a 5-franc piece or a bigger sum, even for a refusal, he sends an affectionate letter of thanks to his relations. Pleased with the result of his examinations, thinking that he had obtained three white balls, he received while at Cahors the official report of the examinations in which he read that he had only obtained one white and two red balls; this little disappointment did not prevent him enjoying his holidays and returning to Paris towards the middle of November with a new stock of confidence which was justified by his popularity with his fellow-students and his early oratorical successes in the Quartier Latin. At the same time, he worked harder and harder in order to support himself and relieve his family as soon as possible from any expense on his behalf. His first letter to his father after his return to Paris proves how sociable the young student already was, how unassuming and how quickly he made friends.

PARIS, November 20, 1857.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I was waiting to write to you until I had got to work again in my lair. I left Châteauroux very late on the evening of the 14th, and I reached my friend Pélissié's lodgings in Paris on the morning of the 15th. Luckily Pélissié had thought of me; but my room is not yet free and so I shall not be able to have it for a few days. Meanwhile I do very well, for Pélissié makes me share his.

I entered my name for the term with some difficulty owing to the very great number of law students.

After having picked up Ganiayré at Orléans we met with a strange adventure. On reaching Paris, I fetched my luggage and advised him to do the same, and then I went off to find a cab for both of us; having unearthed a vehicle, I had my trunk placed on the top and then I waited for Ganiayré to appear with his. After waiting twenty minutes, I saw him walking towards me without his luggage; he jumped into the cab. The driver had already begun to move off when I said to him: "Where is your trunk?" "My trunk?" replied he, "I gave it to a man to carry." I then stopped the cab and alighted with Ganiayré: he had *forgotten* to accompany the porter who had hoisted it on the top of some cab—the Lord knows which. During our hunt for it, I managed to lose Ganiayré; and as he did not reappear at the end of an hour, I was obliged to leave the station without him. Since then, I have neither seen him nor have I heard anything of him and his trunk. Please Heaven he has found it and that he hasn't lost himself this time! . . .

While on my journey from Châteauroux, I met two gentlemen one of whom seemed about twenty-five or

twenty-six years of age and was a handsome fellow with the air of a rich man. We were the best of friends at the end of an hour's conversation. We dined together at Orléans; and we did the same in Paris, where I spent two days with him. He introduced me to one of his cousins, a good-natured old man of sixty-five years of age, very rich, very fond of good living, and extremely witty. After spending a few days in Paris, where he lived like a lord, he left yesterday making me promise to pay him a visit on his estate during the holidays. He has left his brother here who, I hope, will become one of my intimate friends. I only knew yesterday to whom I owed all this kindness; he gave me his card which I have kept to use on a future occasion. His name is Chassériau, and he comes from Barbezieux.

Be so kind as to write to me: 5, rue Soufflot, Paris. . . .

PARIS, *December 3, 1857.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am deeply pained by your silence: I don't know what to do. Alone and without news, I imagine all sorts of disasters may have happened to you or that you are angry with me. I gave you several addresses; I went from one to the other, but—I found nothing from you. I beg you to break this painful silence: tell me why I don't hear from you, but write to me. I am afraid when I remember that I have heard nothing from you for nearly three weeks. I realise the tortures of exile when I think of myself devoured with anxiety, sad and lonely, far away from those I love.

I have no plans as yet; as I told you, I am only occupying an absent friend's room. But I shall lose nothing by waiting; for I have found a cheaper room

capitally situated for my studies and in an excellent neighbourhood quite close to the Luxemburg. I am in the same house as Giraud, Miran, and Tachard: 7, rue de Tournon.* So, if you wish, you can write to me at that address; all I care about is to get a reply.

PARIS, *December 14, 1857.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I will now reply to your dear letter, the contents of which I have read with the greatest pleasure. Yes, you work too hard; and for long you have felt the need of rest and I the need of enabling you to obtain that rest. When, then, shall I, with the fruit of my labours, be able to procure you a calm, happy existence? I shall be content when I can see you in the evening on your farm, surrounded by your family, chatting of the past, blessing God for the present and relating the victories won by honesty and

* One of his fellow-students tells us that he was then living in a little room in the top floor of the Hôtel du Sénat, at the beginning of the rue de Tournon. It was about this time that he began to frequent the Café Voltaire, opposite the Odéon; a room on the first floor was reserved for Gambetta and his friends; it was he who led the brilliant conversation with a verve worthy of his favourite author, Rabelais, upon whom he loved to comment even while walking in the street. Very strong and very fearless, the young orator sometimes provoked noisy disturbances in which he made himself dreaded on account of his tremendous strength; it sometimes happened about this time that he would smash a marble-topped table with one blow of his fist; but the state of his funds prevented him indulging too often in this expensive pastime; in fact, he only repeated this operation when, having won at *écarté*, at which game he fancied himself an adept, he could afford to do so. Notwithstanding Gambetta's exuberant spirits, he managed to get through an enormous amount of work; the lectures at the *École de droit* and at the Sorbonne, the *séances* at the Palais, his improvised speeches at all the small clubs along the left bank of the Seine where politics were discussed, could not wear out his indefatigable energy.

hard work. For you know what we intend to do. I am more desirous than ever for you to retire to Italy, and to live in the land of our fathers and cultivate the rich but neglected soil. You must have everything you want, you must enjoy home-life in your retreat; we shall perhaps become the benefactors of that land; you will there find comfort and simplicity. But in order to obtain all this, I must work hard, work very hard; at times there comes a moment of doubt and despondency, when one begins to regret many things; but the more one thinks of one's family, of what one owes to oneself and to the world in general, the sooner courage returns, and one goes back to one's books fortified by hope and pride.

The beginning of that process called "making a fortune" is very hard, and the present season (winter) gives us cause to grumble. But you know that I don't let things worry me. I am cold, but I laugh at the wind fighting duels in my room. Joviality! that is the holy water with which I exorcise the demon of melancholy. My fire, like myself, is but a poor thing; it blinks at me at night, seems ready to shrink into itself, and is incapable of warming me; so I jump into bed to warm myself by sleep and by dreams of future happiness. If my life is sometimes sad, my dreams are so beautiful that, by the time dawn comes, I firmly trust in the future, and the past is obliterated from my memory. So here I am back again at my work; it requires great care and much research. I will tell you more about it later on. Christmas is coming, and then we shall have New Year's Day. I am beginning to get impatient; I long to put a few years behind me and to find myself nearer the haven where I would be.

Trust in me, as I trust in your affection for me. Remember that you need not write to tell me you love me in order to prove it. . . .

PARIS, *December 28, 1857.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I have left you too long without a letter and I feel quite sad about it. But the days are so short, time flies with such rapidity, that I do not know whether I ought to accuse myself, my lazy habits, or fate. In short, the best way to get out of the hobble is to begin my letter. I have seen M. Decormi, who received me most kindly. God knows how we talked of Cahors, of all of you, and of our mutual friends! He has changed, at least so Sisco says; for, as for me, I don't think I have ever seen him before; his hair is quite white, and he is the proud possessor of the huge abdomen which seems to fall to the lot of all old captains when they are about to retire from their profession. He came to Paris, as I told you, in order to try and get appointed commandant; but, alas! there were no vacancies; the army is overstocked. And then he is so old nobody would pay any attention to his commands. And yet they say that no one deserves promotion more than he does. But enough! merit is held very cheap nowadays. His age will prevent him from getting what he wants.

"Rien aux puissants du jour ne révéla son nom,
Et seule, quand il pleut tant de croix dans l'ornière,
La rose de Cahors brille à sa boutonnière." *

'Tis the old, old story—men are deceived over and over again by what they are pleased to call justice. But

* "Fame knew not the name of this honest man;
Though laurels and honours were showered on others
The rose of Cahors alone adorned his manly breast.

the honest man, who can afford to be proud of his probity, ought he to expect the Government to be grateful for his faithful services? Ought he not rather to content himself with the esteem of his friends, and with the knowledge that he has done his duty? However, there are very few people philosophical enough to look at the matter in this light. For myself, I don't think I should find it difficult, for you taught me the secret of happiness long ago. The lessons learnt at home stand us in good stead in the future; and on that point I have nothing to desire. But I am forgetting what I meant to say: I will return to my subject. And, after all, is it really true that I am wandering from the subject by talking of my family and the lessons learnt at your knees? No—at least, I don't think so; and this is why: what I want to do is exactly expressed in the plans which you drew up for our education and in which I had a larger share than any one else. For what arts, what sciences you and my noble mother, did you not teach me? What have you not done for me? Have I always deserved such abnegation and such love? Assuredly no; but I will make up for lost time in the future. So whenever the horizon seems to narrow, whenever the road seems shorter, I shall make it my business to come and bind a garland of hope and kisses round your neck and whisper the eternal refrain: "I love you as dearly in 1858 as I have always done and always shall do."

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *January 7, 1858.*

MY VERY DEAR FATHER,—I have already written you several letters; but in my haste to *deluge* you with

them, I have often (as I frequently do) forgotten the most important thing. I always forget to acknowledge the receipt of my books which arrived quite safely and which I have put in their proper places. I have already used the packing-case as firewood; I pitied the poor box which reminded me of your kindness: it had travelled such a distance and been nailed with such care! But cold is more eloquent than all the sentiments in the world; I could not resist the pleasure of seeing the flames lick my white hearth-stones so little accustomed to such luxury. I was able to warm myself a little, not very much, though; I read while the laths burned with the clear blue flame of southern pinewood; then I drew up my chair closer and poked the fire. I made it up again, but little by little the flame died down; the white wood had gone and the grate was now filled with grey ashes; the hearth was black. I went to bed with rather a heavy heart, musing over many things until sleep came to drive away my gloomy thoughts and to spread around my bed that curtain of golden dreams which, like the birds in May, come to sing to us of springtime and the future.

I awoke on the morrow; the ashes were now white, I raked them over but only found a few nails; they made me think of steadfast souls who, having passed through cleansing fires, having found strength in struggle and adversity, shall some day or other reach the goal of all desires! . . .

With this last thought I gathered up my books and went off to attend the lectures. The cold outside brought me back to the stern realities of life; I took long strides and, in a few minutes, I was able to congratulate myself that the rue Soufflot had not proved

a Beresina for me without the honours of war. You can hardly imagine how fearfully cold it is in Paris; the Seine and all the ponds in the capital are like flat roads to which those great boobies, called the Parisians, flock and try to dislocate an arm or break a leg for the amusement of the public which, it appears, is equally fond of *patins* and *pantins*.* In comparison with these folk who try to kill themselves in their love for ice, we must place those who kill themselves in their efforts to get warm. For yesterday the *curé* of Saint Sulpice, having overheated the furnace of his church, it exploded, killed five persons and wounded twelve others very seriously. It is all the fault of the winter. And what about the summer? I won't say anything about that; I prefer to wait and not to blame it before it comes. . . .

PARIS, January 17, 1858.

. . . I know: I must persevere, be orderly, ever more orderly; as you say very rightly and as I myself feel, I need to be more orderly in my habits; but daily experience will help me to acquire this habit and the time will come when I shall be almost as orderly as yourself.

And then your letter is the best New Year's gift you could possibly send me. Your assurances that I shall win fame and fortune for myself if I work gave me much pleasure. Though other men may be able to give their sons money and horses, these gifts often prove a curse instead of a blessing. On the contrary, the golden words and principles with which you have endowed me are the most valuable heirlooms any one can possess.

* *Patins* : skates ; *pantins* : puppets.

People say nowadays that home-life no longer exists, that no one believes in the good of such an institution, and that it is only kept up for show; that no one cares for it; and though they talk of doing away with it altogether as useless and unnecessary, I am more rich in my home with all my relations than many another man with all his riches.

And after all, if we do not possess all the comforts of modern existence, those expensive pleasures of gilded luxury, probity and hope are ours. You have always met your engagements, and my name is not like that of a certain gentleman fond of cheating at cards: a thing to be ashamed of and a thorn in my side. You talk of sending me a few sous to replenish my purse which has rather an awkward habit of getting very empty; I shall accept them very gratefully because they are earned by the sweat of your brow; they will be very useful to me. But I have become so content with my lot, that I never find myself wishing that you were richer. So I am happier. Then I shudder when I think of what *I should have been* without you, and then I feel proud when I think of what I am and what I may be. . . .

I will not say much about the great event, although I was strolling along the boulevards that evening, as luck would have it. One of my friends, named Duca Dandolo, *un Milanese*, asked me while we were walking along to explain to him the theory of the *Code pénal* touching attempted assassination. While we were calmly talking over the question, some one a few steps farther along the *boulevard* was putting this theory into practice on a large scale. We heard several loud explosions which nearly extinguished the gas-lamps on the boulevard, and then cries, while the crowd began to rush down the rue

Lepelletier. A special performance was being given that evening at the *Opéra français*, for Ristori, from *les Italiens*, was to appear; and as the Emperor was going to hear her the square outside the theatre was illuminated. Suddenly all the lights went out and in the midst of this darkness three or four bombs were thrown at and fell on the Emperor's carriage. These bombs are round and covered with a thin coating of glass studded with nails which, at the slightest pressure, are driven back into the interior of the bomb and move a spring which strikes some gun-cotton and the bomb explodes, scattering myriads of shot and bullets. No one knows whether these bombs were thrown from a house or by some one standing in the crowd; they fell with terrific force and precision and no one could see whence they came.

The Emperor's carriage was smashed, and its occupants probably only owed their lives to its solidity. One of the horses was blown to pieces. People say that a man flung himself at the horses' heads and stopped them so that the bomb-throwers might have time to throw their projectiles. This individual was trampled under the horses' hoofs and slashed by the lancers; he was eventually carried off, a dripping mass of flesh, blood, and broken bones. General Roquet, who was on the front seat of the carriage, was wounded rather severely on the nape of his neck; the Emperor only owed his life to his coolness; for, on alighting from the carriage, he bent down to see whether it was not a mine which had exploded, and while in that position his hat was riddled with holes. If he had been standing erect he would have been killed. The Empress was struck by a tiny splinter just above the right temple, and her dress was splashed with blood. One hundred and ten persons were wounded, and many

were killed outright or fatally wounded. The Emperor, I must confess, was very calm—and I heard it said that, at the time of the explosion, just as Princess Mathilde arrived in her carriage, Comte Bacciochi offered her his arm to help her descend; the Princess refused and the Emperor said in his usual punctilious way, "How can you expect her to alight? You haven't let down the step." He went into the opera-house where the performance took place as usual; only they say that the Empress was much upset and nearly fainted. Several people have been arrested and some have already been convicted—at least, so they say.

PARIS, *February 2, 1858.*

MY EXCELLENT FATHER,—My last letter, as you saw, was full of thrilling details; it was like a southerner's tongue, always cackling about nothing and ever ready to go off at a tangent along that terrible road called politics, so full of quagmires and so beset with dangers. Then it stops short before some obstacle, like a nervous horse on the edge of a precipice. This obstacle happened in my case to be Prudence, who told me to cut my story in two. The fever is sure to attack me sooner or later, whenever I talk or whenever I write; and then I go and run my head against a pike, which may be one way of ending one's career but not one to be proud of. In short, I stopped for the most excellent of all reasons: fear, which a sharp writer, well up in the tricks of his trade, would call prudence. I will go on with my story to-day. I ought to be braver now, and if it were summer-time, I should say that we were about to enter the constellation of Leo. But, hush! No astrology, and above all, no judicial astrology!

So now : only four actors, including a leading gentleman, seem to have taken part in the terrible tragedy of January 14th, enacted under the portico of the opera-house. The names of these four actors are : Pierri, Da Sylvia, Rudio, and Gomez ; the front-rank man is the Comte Orsini. There is no doubt that the authors of this prodigious production, the *dénouement* of which has for long been expected, are exiles, Ledru or Mazzini, Frenchmen or Italians, scattered leaves of democracy. The regularity of these attacks, the skill, the depth, the secrecy of these attempts denote the hand of Mazzini. Where in Europe, or in the whole world, is the person who would play Mazzini's part and who would dare to juggle with the heads of kings and emperors ? He alone can defy police and bayonet ; both serpent and lion, he glides along, and then pounces upon his prey at the proper moment and devours it. Until to-day, history has been unable to furnish us with any example of a man who, though apparently an outlaw, is strong enough to strike the strongest. So there is no doubt about the matter. Mazzini is the redoubtable author of this bomb explosion. But how will they be able to prove him guilty ? None of our legists will be able to do so. How will they be able to prove to the world that the hand which threw the bombs is in London or Brussels ? Every one is sure that he is in one or other of these cities—good ! But Justice is not content with so little ; she wants proofs, and those proofs are not forthcoming. The silence of the accused men would make a deaf and dumb person blush for shame. They have made up their minds to die ; and as they know that confession does not prove innocence but guilt, they say nothing. Besides, they are not ordinary culprits ; murderers from

conviction, led astray by false principles, I must confess that they are thoroughly convinced that they are fighting for their rights; each one of them believes himself to be a Brutus, and they will act like the brother of Harmodius who swallowed his tongue lest it should betray him! They think themselves endowed with noble characters, and they will deem it an honour to die like the Templars! They talk so much of Brutus in Italy that these men probably think themselves martyrs and not murderers. Human logic is so different according to the way one looks at things; what one person considers canonisation means a *guillotinate* to another. Yes, it will be difficult to condemn them to death, for there are no very important proofs of their guilt. But what is very strange is that it will be impossible to implicate London and Brussels in the accusation; many inferences will be drawn, many old stories will be raked up again, many hints and many revelations will be made, and yet no one will ever know the truth! Despotism must possess some wonderful power by which it makes the scales of justice obey its behests. Posterity, when judging this case, will pay no attention to the newspapers of the period, more or less official mediums for public opinion; but it will either condemn the accused or else damn their judges for all eternity.

We ought to remember the judges of Louis XI., and those of Richelieu; they, perhaps, may be excused on account of the ignorance and cruelty of their times, two squint-eyed sisters with bloody hands, who always walked hand-in-hand; and so they should have no place in the annals of the nineteenth century, the age of light—I dare not add philanthropy. . . . And yet, think what we were in 1830, and even in 1848. What a bloody barrier rises

at my feet ! I dare not, I cannot read that fatal script—my eyes are full of tears. Can you hear those piteous cries ? The streets are filled with dead and dying youths, their hair trampled in the mud, their mouths stained with powder and the blood of France. Such was 1852 ! *

Let us throw a veil over these bloody memories, a thick crape veil, as heavy and as impervious as lead, and let us pass on. The Emperor was astonishingly cool, both during the affair and after it was all over. . . .

You know how he was congratulated, his visits with his wife to the wounded, his parades, his numerous drives through the streets of Paris in order to show that he was not afraid. You have read much in the newspapers concerning the accused men ; I can tell you nothing more ; I can only add that Orsini is even braver than Bonaparte. Orsini would manage to get out of the third circle of Hell as mentioned by Dante ; Bonaparte has never got out of anything except Ham ; if they had put him in the dungeons of Mantua, I bet he would still be there. *He* would not have got out of a carefully guarded prison ; *he* would not have jumped ninety feet with only a short rope to help him, broken his knee and, notwithstanding this fearful fall, swam across the lake of Mantua. Latude's performance seems quite childish in comparison with this escapade : *he* took thirty years to make an aperture in a partition twenty feet thick. Orsini in thirty days managed to break through a three-barred window twenty feet below the surface of the earth and to escape from a dungeon where the light of day never entered. If one were allowed to erect a Pantheon to the

* The above lines allude to the Revolutions of July 1830, February 1848, the death of Baudin on the barricades, December 3, 1851, and the acts of repression in 1852.

memory of scoundrels, I would put my name down for a laurel-wreath as an *ex-voto*.

The case will not be tried yet; I will keep you well informed when once it begins. You probably read the Emperor's speech at the *Corps législatif*; it is just like all his others, and leaves nothing to be desired. Any one who, after reading it, can squeeze out a tear of regret must be a very soft-hearted creature. The game—that is to say the first trick—is lost; we call that *capot* at piquet; in politics, where things go pretty briskly when the players are at all sharp, we call it tit for tat. . . .

PARIS, *February* 17, 1858.

. . . We have the *père* G—— here. They say that the Emperor is going to give the son a consulship. These poor Dives are always crying for more; one would think the richer they were, the more they wanted.

Oh, God! give me enough money so that I may be able to send my father to end his days in the sweet sunshine of Italy*: that is all I desire. Yes, just a little corner of that beautiful Italy, where we may love each other for ever and show each other a thousand little kindnesses under the shadow of those pine-trees, on that soft heath, where delicious mushrooms grow, facing that emerald sea which in its immensity reminds us of the shortness of life and how our love for each other ought to help to brighten the path. . . .

Orsini and his companions are to be tried the day after to-morrow. Every place is taken; however, if there is one seat vacant I shall get it, and you can count upon

* Nice, where Joseph Gambetta wished to end his days, and where he eventually died, still belonged to Italy. It did not become French territory until two years later.

hearing all the details. What a splendid stage, what an arena, and what combatants! On one side we see Chaix-d'Est-Ange representing the Crown, and on the other side those models for young advocates: Jules Favre, who knows how to speak his mind; Crémieux, who, better than any one else, can find out the weak spot in his adversary's armour; M. Mathieu, who, although so young, is so cool and collected that one would think him an old Greek philosopher; and finally the president of the order, Liouville, the *doyen* of the advocates and the father of the young *stagiaires*. For the last week I have been preparing my heart, my ears, and my memory. Oh! when shall I be able to prepare a speech? . . .

PARIS, April 28, 1858.

MY GOOD FATHER,—Another month has gone; I have passed another milestone on the high-road of life. When I have passed twenty-five or thirty more of these stones I shall have come to the end of my journey, and I shall begin to erect some milestones on my own account.

I came back to my old quarters this evening in order to fetch my books and my dressing-gown, the dear old fatherly garment which I shall only exchange for my first advocate's *toge*,* and then it will be with tears in my eyes. It has been such a warm, faithful friend to me! When I think of the day when we shall have to part, I long to get it a niche in the Louvre among the purple and lily-strewn mantles of our sovereigns, the dead Bourbons and Napoleons . . .

PARIS, June 15, 1858.

MY GOOD FATHER,—I have not written to you for a long time. I think my silence is partly due to the intoler-

* *Toge*: black gown worn by French advocates.

able heat, or perhaps to my anxiety concerning the coming examinations. However, it is no good sending you news of myself if I never get any from you, or only from some other member of the family who does not hate pens and ink quite as much as you do. You cannot imagine how I suffer when I get no letters from you. I work, and then I pause in the midst of my studies and I say to myself: "What are they doing? What are they thinking about? I have had no news of them for so many days, weeks, and months!" And then I go back to my books with a heavy heart. I feel that I am alone, far from my dear ones who send me no news from home. Happily I am not quite so lonely as I sometimes imagine myself to be when I feel downhearted. I go to Versailles, where I find you, my sister, my aunt, and my mother all united in Sisco. That is the strange part of our friendship: Sisco represents the whole family to me. I felt very miserable yesterday, so I jumped into the train and arrived at Sisco's quite unexpectedly. What am I saying?—quite unexpectedly?—he always expects me, and is always ready to welcome me. He dressed immediately. It was awfully hot. We thought we would go and see the park, so we went off arm-in-arm, and wandered down the dark avenues, pausing at the foot of some group by Coustou or Coysevox, chatting and laughing while waiting for dinner. We heard the clock of the Grand-Roi strike, and then we sat down to a sumptuous repast; I was really sorry that you were not there. But as I told you in my last letter, you must come to Versailles and stay there as long or as short a time as you wish. . . .

I hope this will be for next year; however, we can talk the matter over during the holidays.

PARIS, *August 19, 1858, 2.11 p.m.*

MY DEAR FATHER, MY GOOD MOTHER,—I have at last crossed the redoubtable pass, and far more *successfully* than I had dared to hope.* I received as many white balls as one can possibly obtain; I could not have done better. And remember that the examination was terribly stiff; I was the eleventh in my series—that is to say, that I had but a poor chance to succeed, although my professors were splendid. After passing my examination (which, vanity aside, I did very brilliantly), M. Vernet came up to me and congratulated me most heartily. I thanked him very much for his kindness; but I had deserved my success. So I am now going to take a good rest. My eyes are rather tired. . . . LÉON.

PARIS, *November 17, 1858.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I have been meaning to write to you for several days. On getting into bed I say to myself, I will do it to-morrow; and the morrow passes, as its predecessors, like an express train. Time slips through our fingers with the rapidity of a dream; the months pass like water through a sieve. It seems only the other day that I was at Cahors; and now, in a few hours' time, I shall have been back a whole month. And to think that life is made up of time: minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years! . . .

I have passed a very pleasant week, beginning with the Montalembert lawsuit and ending with the case in which homœopathic and allopathic doctors, through the medium of their advocates, Maîtres Ollivier and Andral, in true brotherly fashion, called each other the most

* Gambetta at this, his first examination for a Bachelor's Degree, obtained three white balls and one red.

horrible names and lashed each other with ironical taunts during two whole days; then *Sallantini*, the Attorney-General, came and flourished about, like the good creature that he is, dealing out blows right and left, laughing heartily, amusing the court, and ending up by recommending the judge to dismiss the case, which he will probably do next week.

The Emperor and the Empress have returned to Paris: that is to say, the illuminations and *fêtes* have recommenced while waiting for the Emperor of Russia, who, they say, is to pay us a visit this winter. We are back again in 1815. The present political tragedy is a parody of a piece which was fairly successful forty-three years ago. Long live our friends, the enemy! But that is what always happens: action is always followed by reaction. But I am amusing myself by prosing and it is time to be off to the lecture.

So goodbye and *à bientôt*; kiss my mother, my sister, and my aunt; remember that I shall continue to work hard and that I shall always be your devoted son,

LEON GAMBETTA,

7, rue de Tournon.

PARIS, December 17, 1858.

. . . Tell M. Bessières* to get my name put down for the drawing by lots according to Article 9 of the *code Napoléon* as revised by Articles 1 and 2 of the law dated March 22-23, 1849. That is all: put my name down for the conscription; unfortunately I shall be struck off the list†; however, the law does not discriminate, I shall enjoy the benefit of the fact that I was born in France of

* The Mayor of Cahors and a very intimate friend of Gambetta's family.

† Because he was blind of one eye.

a foreign father who himself was born in a foreign land ; as his child I now offer to draw lots without asking to be exempted on the plea that I am of foreign extraction, without saying : " You cannot oblige me to draw lots : I do not belong to you ! "

The maladies which were eventually to undermine Léon Gambetta's health date from about this time. We have seen how his father reproached him for his disorderly conduct. But he was not only unruly at times, he was also very careless of his personal appearance. If, while still a child, he had taken more care of his injured eye, he would never have suffered so severely, and he would not have been eventually obliged to have it removed. His health began to fail during the winter of 1858-59, when he was twenty years of age ; but he paid no attention to it, and only laughed at his friends' warnings. Notwithstanding the tardy treatment of his friend Clary and Dr. Langlebert, he always remained subject to throat troubles ; it was owing to this youthful indifference, to his habit of neglecting the rules of hygiene and even the most rudimentary precautions, that his voice often became thick and hoarse. Ten years later the trouble returned, and this time his throat became seriously affected.

" Relhié," says P. Arnault, the friend of his boyhood, " even feared that he would not be able to speak again for a long time. A cure on the banks of the Lake of Geneva and a good rest during the holidays of 1869 set him on his feet again ; but his voice never recovered its brilliancy, and in future he was unable to perform those feats of endurance for which he had become so famous ; on more than one occasion he suffered from hoarseness,

and I am convinced that these throat troubles ruined his once splendid health, and were not altogether unconnected with his unfortunate and premature death."

He was now at the summit of that extraordinary popularity which made him the students' hero. Those who knew him during this stormy period of his existence never forgot him.

Léon Cladel later described in the following graphic terms his impressions of Gambetta:—

"... He fell like a bomb upon Paris. I can see him with his leonine mane, his bloodshot eye bulging far out of its socket; I can still hear him roaring forth his fiery apostrophes against the *César de contrebande* whom he was to succeed in some measure. Yes, in spite of his sloppy, badly-cut clothes, evidently made by a provincial tailor, he looked a splendid fellow. I can remember how the poet Gustave Mathieu, having met him somewhere about town one day, with his collar flying and his coat all unbuttoned, came up to us still half-deafened by the future tribune's animal-like roarings, crying: 'We've got another Jupiter! So much the worse for M. Vêto! Mirabeau has come to life again!'

"We were delighted to hear this assertion, and we approved it. Often while applauding this sharp-tongued southerner while he bawled out volcanic harangues in the style of the elder Riquetti at the *Assemblée nationale*, and especially the violent apostrophes beloved of Danton in the *Convention*, with a running accompaniment of such astonishing exclamations as *foutre! bougre!* and *nom de Dieu!* we felt a shiver of enthusiasm course through our veins such as must have stirred the blood of our ancestors; and we young fellows, disgusted by the general state of platitude around us, said to each other that the Hercules

of the Republic and the Destroyer of the Empire had at last appeared on the scene. . . ."

PARIS, *January 17, 1859.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I have not written to you for a long time; but I beg you not to scold me too much, although I may deserve your blame. I am very busy. I am working hard, so hard in fact that, while studying Roman law, I almost forget the dear exiles at Cahors. . . .

I have not been up for my examinations yet, and that for a very good reason. I am probably quite ready to pass; but as a professorship of law has just become vacant in Paris I spend nearly the whole day attending lectures; and then I am in no hurry: I want to pass as well as possible, and I mean to do more than merely satisfy your ambition.

Sisco is in splendid health. He has not even caught cold, which, considering the weather we are now having, is very extraordinary. I have not been so lucky: I have got a devilish cold. . . .

Let us talk of other things, of Italy for instance—no, we had better not speak of her—let her alone. Who knows? Perhaps she will be free by New Year's Day, 1860.

We are at peace again; the Bourse is looking up. There will be some financial disasters this month; the rumours of war will at least have had that effect.

PARIS, *February 19, 1859.*

. . . I blame myself for one thing concerning my examinations; and yet, although I may call it blame, I almost feel as if I were congratulating myself. Now, I tell you this because pride and modesty are equally absurd when one is talking to one's father: truth alone

should speak. Now, this is what has happened to me: by dint of working, of studying and restudying the examination subjects, I have gone too deep and *I know too much*; by digging a little deeper every day, instead of hastening, I have only retarded the time when I ought to go up for my examination. Luckily, no time will be wasted, for I have got through half of my task for the doctor's degree, and this will facilitate my work for next year. But it does not matter; it is time for me to make up my mind. So I am going over everything rapidly and superficially, and then I shall go up for my examinations. As to the result, I am glad to be able to *tell* you that you need not worry.*

The Cahors newspapers seem particularly full of financial disasters; one feels that that corner of the world will always be fond of money, and that it must get it by hook or by crook. Oh! father, how proud I am of you, when I think that I owe you everything—my education, the life I am now leading, the place in society I shall occupy some day, and that I shall be able to walk through the world with my head erect, saying to myself, "Although my father left me but a small fortune, it was earned by honesty and virtue." And till my last breath I shall associate you and my mother in my thanksgiving prayer for that inestimable blessing, a good name, which you have left me as a priceless heirloom. . . . I am getting to know more people; one can only hope to succeed by making plenty of friends. I am now sure to find clients, and good clients too, when I am called to the bar. Oh! how I will work! I have lately made the acquaintance of Marshal Vaillant's nephew; of course,

* Gambetta, on March 3, 1859, passed his first law examinations most brilliantly, having obtained three white balls and one red.

one can never tell, but he will have to be pretty sharp if I cannot make him, some day or the other, introduce me to *his uncle*. . . .

PARIS, *March 17, 1859.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—To-day I, too, must come and take my place by the family hearthstone: I must really kiss you and bring you the good news which the son owes to the father who has made him what he is and what he will be! I, more than any other member of the family, ought to feel grateful to you, for I am the one who has cost you most and caused you the greatest anxiety. But we love one another as much as it is possible for father and son to love each other. Are we not real friends through joy and sorrow, in the past as in the future? Ah! we only learn to value home-life—that most adorable of all institutions—when far away, when we begin to regret our mother's kisses and our father's advice! Sometimes the heart flies home to those dear ones, our own flesh and blood, clings to them, and refuses to leave them. Sometimes that heart cries to talent and ambition, "Avaunt! I will stay beside the fireside, between the mother whom I adore and the father so worthy of that name, heaven on earth, happiness shared by three beings!" And never have I felt this more than at the present moment, on your birthday, when Paris, drenched by hail and rain and splashed with mud, makes me remember the smiling province where Nature is preparing to resume her mantle of flower-enamelled verdure, where the sun is melting the snow, dressing the countryside in fair tints, and making the face of mankind beam with youthful freshness! But the son's dreams pale before the man's ambition; and though the heart may come and swing its censer and lay its love-offering at the feet

of the head of the family, the intellect resists and cries, "And what about the future?" . . . Imagination awakens, Hope touches you with her wing, and you say to yourself: "My good parents, my devoted father, my tender mother, love me, love me still; be assured that I adore you, and forgive me if Fate wills not that I should pass my life at your knees. Why did not God make us richer? I would never have left you—no, not for a single moment! All and always yours, I should have lived without a single ambition, without a care. But Fate decided otherwise: Fate willed that we should be poor. You, by your life of struggles and endeavours, have won for yourself the fortune which belongs to every honest man; I must follow the star, and climb up and take my place by the side of the rich and happy of this world."

But in the arena which lies before me I shall ever see my father's form, and the memory of my mother will sustain and guide me in the fray. And then as each year comes round I shall feel glad, oh! so glad, to be able to say to my beloved father: "Here, dear old father, this day belongs to you. March 19th is your property, and I consecrate it to you. I shall give myself a holiday because it is your birthday." And on that day we will all go and sit in the sunshine. Who knows whether that sun will not be the sun of Italy?—the beautiful sunshine of resuscitated Italy? . . . Meanwhile I send you my whole soul in this letter. I press you all to my heart.

Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *May* 10, 1859.

We must hope that from the present dark days a new light will arise to lead the young men of France;

the old men are rapidly disappearing. We ought to be very grateful for one thing in the present state of affairs, and that is, that all the most distinguished men of our time are old or near death; to-morrow they will have ceased to live; and after to-morrow the young men, those who are ambitious and eager for the fray, will step into the gap. This Italian campaign will make some breaches in the ranks which will have to be filled.

The Emperor starts this evening for Italy, they say; all the officials now in Paris have been to wish him a pleasant journey. The people will have their turn at eleven o'clock this evening; when the Emperor leaves Nôtre Dame after the *Te Deum*, they will give him a real ovation, something worth having, because it will come from the heart. These good Parisians are all a-gog for the war which they believe will make Italy independent. God grant that they be not mistaken! I have told you enough of my opinions and my fears on this matter, so I will say no more. Meanwhile Italy is ready and the volunteers are doing their duty, Garibaldi and his host have broken through the Austrian lines and carried off three hundred prisoners. You will see that this brave Genoese will continue to be the soul of the war and the guardian angel of the Italian people. At one time it was said that our troops were going to abandon Rome, but a counter-order was given; the Holy Father (may the devil take him!) has apparently abjured Austria, *il celasco*.* In France, as in Italy, we are longing to hear of an engagement, because it would mean a victory. I hope, however, that nothing much will happen before another fortnight has

* *Il celasco* : the artful dog.

elapsed. No one can or must begin such a war, a war carried on in a flat land, until everything is ready and properly prepared, and that cannot be until 100,000 or 150,000 troops have been massed together. It is better to wait a few days if, by so doing, the result may be more favourable, and I think matters may stop there if Austria does not succeed in dragging Germany into the fray. If the Germanic Confederacy puts its finger into the pie, no one can tell where it will all end. But probably the presence of our friend Russia on the frontiers of the Dnieper will prevent the German States joining Austria. . . .

PARIS, June 24, 1859.

A dead calm has fallen upon Paris; nothing, no troops, no *fêtes*, no sovereign, no gala performances, no fine dandies driving to their *châteaux*, very little sun, plenty of rain—that is to say enough mud to last till doomsday—that is what the last week has been like. Nothing has happened, except at our dear bar, where each day some grand and sublime voice makes itself heard; yesterday it was Jules Favre; to-day Berryer and Crémieux appeared in the lawsuit between the *coulissiers* * and the stockbrokers. Berryer pleaded as if he were still in his twenties; it was thrilling. Ah! when shall I be able to take my place in this battalion of eloquent speakers? But patience! the examinations are approaching, we are going to pass. And yet they will be very lengthy and very stiff. I am worked to death; but the month of August will see me an advocate. When I think of the result of those examinations I

* *Coulissiers*: stock-jobbers who transact business on the exchange without being licensed as stockbrokers.

seem to see the heavens open and to catch a glimpse of God's crown of glory.

But I must still work during the holidays so that I may gain a year and finish off the examinations for the doctor's degree very quickly. I shall not be able to come next year before carnival time. Meanwhile, that you may feel my absence less, the good Sisco will come and bring you my thesis and tell you all I hope to do in the future.

I feel more confident every day ; in a word, I believe that there is a star waiting in the firmament of Fate for him who embraces you with all his heart.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, August 17, 1859.

MY GOOD FATHER—As I told you, I went up for my examination in composition last night, and to-day I go up for my fourth. I am leaving the *École de droit* ; I have passed, and passed very well as you will see in the report.*

Only you will notice one very strange thing—and that is that they have given me one black ball on account of an argument which I had with the professor of commercial law ; I will tell you all about it when we meet. So now I only have to finish my thesis ; so far I have had nothing from the Sorbonne. I shall know in a few days if I have to go up for the examination. I will write and let you hear when I have decided to start. I want to find out if Sisco is likely to be going away soon. I could wait for him until the end of the month ; but if he cannot start then, I shall be off as soon as possible. I long to be home again. I need to see you and to rest awhile. . . .

* He received one black, two red, and two white balls.

August, 1859.

MY DEAR FATHER—I am writing from Sisco's room. I have just come to tell him that I leave to-morrow, Tuesday, by the train for Bordeaux, so I shall reach Cahors on the following evening at half-past eight or nine o'clock. I have hastened my departure because I saw that the spiteful bureaucrats at the Sorbonne would prevent me passing my thesis; this little disappointment is, however, of but small consequence; I shall have forgotten it altogether by November. My uncle must have received a letter from me in which I told him that I should let him know when I was coming. Be so kind as to show him this; I have no time to write to him.

PARIS, October 29, 1859.

. . . I promise every day, every year, to sin no more, to be an exemplary son and correspondent in future; but notwithstanding all these good resolutions, the thoughtlessness of youth gets the better of me and makes me forget. And yet, ought one to be thoughtless in one's conduct towards one's father, one's family, one's friends, that other family after one's own heart? Alas! no; and it is a sign of the times, and proves that the education which children usually receive nowadays is too superficial. Hardly do we leave the nursery, when we know everything or nearly everything; we only lack one little thing, a little thing which is as big as the universe in reality: common-sense. We live by borrowed knowledge; we believe everything we hear; we are like artificial flowers, very handsome no doubt, but scentless and devoid of that brilliancy which belongs to maturity. Do what we will, we cannot outstride our generation; the most we can do is to

discard its vices or keep its failings. We are lucky in this sad life in having relations kind enough to excuse everything, for they know very well that we love them! . . . As you want a newspaper, I strongly advise you to subscribe to the *Opinion Nationale*, a sensible, high-class paper, very Italian in its sympathies.

PARIS, November 11, 1859.

MY GOOD FATHER,—One thing has given me great pleasure and that is to see that you have chosen the *Opinion Nationale* as a newspaper after your own heart. I am pleased for two reasons: first, because I am a democrat, and, secondly, because I am on its staff. The principal editor lately came to see me; I did not know who he was. He said that he wanted to have me on the staff of his paper. At first I said I was not suited for such a position. He insisted; I ended by accepting, only I asked for a little time to prepare myself for the struggle. It is a sensible, well-balanced, philosophical newspaper; I thought you would not be sorry to see me in such an honourable post. An article by me on the Italian question will appear in a few days. I hope that you will like it.

I may be able to earn some money soon. When one has to earn one's own living one has to knock at everybody's door, and one can count oneself lucky when one is as well received as I have been on this occasion. Only I wonder if I ought to sign the article with my own name.

But that is of secondary importance: law is the principal thing. The lectures will recommence in a few days time. We are going to polish off our thesis and then begin our preparations for taking the doctor's

degree, which I promise to do as soon as possible. So what more can I tell you? I have never felt more sure of myself, which is a very good sign for the future. Meanwhile take care of yourself, think of me and believe me when I tell you that I love you to distraction. Only I am rather at a loss to meet all these foolish expenses incurred by my thesis, the printing of the same and entering my name for the term, which ruin and worry me terribly. I expect some pupils, but they have not returned from the country yet. I hope that this uncertain state of affairs will soon come to an end. . . .

PARIS, *November 28, 1859.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I received your kind letter, in which I read for the hundredth time all your good wishes for me and my future. I shall not be able to thank you properly and effectively until I can be sure that you will have a happy old age; but we must wait. The road is long; luckily I am young and a good walker; and then I begin to find that many people are willing to give me a helping hand. For instance, I stayed at home last Sunday, as I had the earache; M. Valette came to pay me a visit—rather a rare event; it is not often that a professor takes the trouble to go and see a humble student. He will make me succeed, if he can. . . .

I received a very kind letter from my uncle yesterday. I am sending him my copy of the *Opinion Nationale*. I shall not write regularly in it for the next few months, because I have to prepare myself for this sort of work. I shall write an article from time to time, but I shall have to be better up in my subject if I want to write any important articles. A fortnight ago I gave in an article

which I did not sign, because I did not dare to do so—you had not given me your consent.

You tell me how you stint yourself for me. I know it and it grieves me to the heart; but I cannot do without your support just yet a bit; I told you that I ought to attend lectures or to get a professor to cram me during the holidays; it would cost 150 francs per annum, which really is not dear. But I could not put down my name, for I had not got the money. I shall have to do it sooner or later; and if I delay it now I shall lose so many lessons. If you could advance me the money I should gain time. . . .

I cannot bear to make so many demands upon your generosity; I cannot help it, unfortunately. I leave the matter in your hands. Only remember that I will never make needless demands.

PARIS, *January 19, 1860.*

MY KIND FATHER,—I have finished my thesis at last.* You know that I needed more time than other students in order to prepare myself for the ordeal. I wanted to write something worth reading, and I think that I have done so. Many people have congratulated me; I am going to get it from the examiners and send it to you with a list of those to whom you ought, or you may think you ought, to send it. Meanwhile, I embrace you, beg you to excuse these delays, and to scold my uncle for not having replied to my New Year's letter. I am going to tell the good news to Sisco. Adieu! Your son who loves you,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Léon Gambetta's political opponents have always been too fond of repeating that the young tribune was known

* On January 19, 1860, Gambetta received for his thesis two white and three red balls.

in the Quartier Latin as a tavern-hunter. We have just seen what a life of hard work but seldom broken by intervals of idleness was Gambetta's while a student. One fact apart from his success as a scholar will suffice to prove this: in 1859 his name figured on the roll of honour of pupils authorised to compete for the *prix Beaumont*; only those students who had passed all their examinations and received the maximum number of white balls—and those students were very few in number—could compete for these prizes. Gambetta's name figures with fourteen white balls out of twenty-one. We shall soon see that this "model of bad behaviour," the proud possessor of an allowance not exceeding the sum of 100 *francs a month*, had managed, during four years of hard work—and "debauch," according to his enemies—to get into debt to the amount of 500 francs, which debt he meant to pay out of his little savings if his creditor, the keeper of the restaurant where he usually dined, had not spitefully told the father of his son's extravagance.

PARIS, *January 27, 1860.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I am astonished at receiving no news of my thesis either from you or from my uncle or from any of my dear ones; one would think that all means of communication had been abolished. . . . Sisco is very well; he was delighted to see that I had dedicated my work to him, and he has made me present some copies to his regiment. He was as pleased as I was to be able to give them this pleasure. I passed my examinations very well. The President congratulated me; Professor Brossard, who gave me a black ball at my last examinations last year, was again upon the list of examiners this year; but in a discussion which arose

between us concerning a question of *droit public*,* he was obliged to confess that I was right; he then apologised for his conduct last year and gave me a white ball. We shall be good friends in future, and I am very glad of it, for I may find him very useful some day.

I sent my thesis to my uncle: no reply. I wrote him a letter for New Year's Day: no reply. I have written to ask for an explanation.

I do not know whether you are all plotting to keep me without news of my dear ones; I protest and I shall not be content until each one of you has sent me a long letter. I am well punished for not writing as often as I ought to have done, for I, as your son, have every reason to love you,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

* *Droit public*: the law of nations.

III

GAMBETTA THE ADVOCATE

PARIS, *February 27, 1860.*

THE high-road lies before us ; we must step boldly forth, hold up our head and strive. I am quite ready ; but I intend to get as many people to back me up and to guide me as possible, so that I may not wear myself out over the very first obstacle. I must tell you that I am trying to persuade Maître Dufaure, the most successful advocate in Paris, to take me into his office ; it is true that I shall be earning nothing, but I shall have the benefit of his advice, his experience, and his powerful protection ; with such supports and a little sunshine, I ought to grow and bear both good and fine fruit.

I should have liked to have been able to tell you that the matter is settled ; but everything is not quite arranged yet : one has to parley, to be introduced, discussed, almost dissected. I hope I shall find myself in his office before another month has elapsed.

It will be a glorious day, father, when I can take my place in the office of the most celebrated juris-consult in Paris. But we must say nothing about the matter until it is arranged.

I hope to take the oath some time before the end of the

month. Oh! how I long to begin to plead! My tongue smarts to begin. "*I am afraid of being afraid*," as Montaigne said; therein lies the courage of the brave. When will that happy day come?

Just now I am longing to make my *début*. I go to the theatre and to the *Palais* where I find endless lessons and models.

When shall I be allowed to imitate my models? I can think of nothing else. My mind, my whole existence is bound up in that word: to plead! If I am unlucky, if I go under, I shall throw off my gown and give myself up to the study of Roman law; I shall go back to the *École de droit*, and in five years' time I shall become a professor. It will grieve me to sacrifice all my cherished dreams of becoming a barrister, to leave the battle-field of eloquence on which I thought I was destined to shine; but I shall still have a comfortable berth to fall back upon, a berth in which one can enjoy rest, peace, idleness even and esteem, instead of the noise and glamour which eloquence always brings in its train. But let us hope that I shall not go under, and that I shall be able to send you a veritable bulletin of victory signifying: "The future belongs to us. The wind fills our sails. Whither are we going?—To the height of all honours!"

You know this, so why should I hide the truth from you, my kind father? Ambition is like a thorn in my side; perhaps I am only the sport of my pride! But, after all, ambition is not a sin. Pride is a power in itself; and with Work to act as a lever and with Necessity to spur one on, what cannot an energetic, honest young fellow do who has all his father's life before him to serve him as an example? So I am well provided

with courage and filial love for you and for all the others
whom I embrace.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, February 29, 1860.

MY GOOD FATHER,—I received your letter yesterday, and I have just re-read it after finishing my evening task ; it has consoled and encouraged me. It seems to me that my little room changes and becomes larger ; I see around me many familiar objects : your excellent Voltaire, your looking-glasses still tied up in pink tissue-paper, the boat, like a proud escutcheon, to speak to us of the past and to bear us into the future. I love these day-dreams ; I fancy that I am sitting near the fireside with its coloured tiles representing dancing Chinamen ; I can see all my dear ones, cheerful and trusting in the future. There are times in a man's life when memory becomes his guardian angel ; it seems like some good fairy who, with one touch of her magic wand, spreads before our eyes wearied by long study, the fields, houses, men, objects, even the sky of our absent home ; for the old proverb is quite true : "*It is not good for man to be alone.*" So family ties are no empty expression, a meaningless word, a futile trope ; nothing is more real, more true. We are united to our family by bonds of living flesh which, when broken, bleed without ceasing, and can only be healed by being reunited—that is to say, by returning to the bosom of our family. These ties are as a sweet chain which one would gladly bear all one's life. It will always be my delight to see you around me to love me in the midst of the struggle for existence. If I can ever afford it, I shall gather my family round me ; they shall be the pride and consolation of my life ; they are all mine, in me and for me. As you say, I must work, persevere,

and be prudent if I want to obtain my wish. I will listen to you; what you say concerning your own experience agrees with everything which men of learning and wisdom assert. "Grasp all, lose all," said a wise Roman. And our Emperor, when in exile, wrote: "With time on my side everything is possible." "He who waits can do anything," said Louis XI. Robespierre wrote: "Half the secret of success lies in knowing how to wait." All these men give us the key of their success; let us do as they did: let us wait. Meanwhile let us repeat the saying of another glorious Cæsar of this world: *Laboremus*.

I acknowledge that you are quite right when you complain that I am behindhand with my thesis; but, after all, it does not really matter much; I have been working up the subject, and two months more or less matter little in a long career. Besides this is the last time. I have not yet received my diploma on account of certain changes which are taking place at the *Institut publique*. I am anxiously awaiting it, for it will be very welcome. It was promised for the month of March.

I have renewed my acquaintance with M. Auferin, my old tutor at Montfaucon, who is here in a wealthy family teaching the two sons. We go and see each other. His employer, the Marquis de Charnacé, is a very rich man who, I much hope, will serve me some day or the other as a stepping-stone to better things. I must cultivate that man; he thinks my thesis formidable. He is judge at the *Cour impériale* of Paris. His eldest son is not yet a *bachelier*,* unfortunately for me. When he is so, I shall be able to earn a little money by giving

* *Bachelier*: bachelor of a university.



Mlle BENEDETTA GAMBETTA,
Gambetta's Sister

him lessons. M. Auferin begs me to congratulate you and to give you his kind regards. . . .

Kiss my sister for me, and tell her that I have got something in my mind's eye for her; if I succeed, I shall send her a little present. In the old days of kings and parliaments, advocates, solicitors, and judges always received perquisites and nice little douceurs for their ladies; as I shall not be married before 1895, I will give them to my sister.

PARIS, *March 8, 1860.*

MY FATHER,—Be indulgent and read this: one cannot spend three or four years in Paris with impunity; with the best of intentions, one ends by doing wrong, which, when one happens to be a young man, usually takes the form of getting into debt.

Like most young men of my age, I have been foolish, tempted to do idiotic things, and behave badly; by quarter-day, I found that I was pretty deeply in debt. But as I knew exactly how much I had and how many and great sacrifices you had made for me, I hid my trouble from you, for I hoped to be able to settle the matter by myself without any help from you; it was only right that I alone should suffer for my own fault.

So I worked for some time with that object in view; but I had reckoned without my spiteful host. As I had determined to repay him with my own money, I had to make him wait; I had already managed to save 200 francs which I was going to give him, when I heard that he had just written to you, because he thought that you would pay him the whole sum at once; he exaggerated the amount of my debt for he, with his own hand, wrote that it only amounted to 545 francs. You see that the instalment which I

intended to give him was sufficient, and that I should have paid what I call my student's follies without your knowledge. I had always counted upon him, for he owed a number of his clients to me, and I had helped him to recover sums of money which, had it not been for me, he would still be waiting for. But one might as well trust in the wind as in mankind: men are even more changeable and more spiteful. Never mind! He will get his 200 francs to-night; I shall earn the rest as quickly as possible, and then we need say no more about the matter. But the harm will have been done; you will have learnt that at the end of four years I found myself in debt to the amount of 500 francs. Certainly it is not a fortune, but it means a great deal to us. However, it will not jeopardise my future; I shall pay him off within a few months without any trouble. You see, I can only confess my fault to you, only confess that I wanted to hide it that I might spare you pain, you who deserve to be always happy. But my anxiety to redeem my fault could not prevail against ill-luck and prevent that damned fellow annoying you. My inexperience caused me to act foolishly; now that I am more sensible, I only ask to be allowed to amend my foolish conduct. I will pay for my own stupidity; I shall not be very long about it, and I hope to be encouraged in my task by the knowledge that my father will be touched by my repentance and my efforts, and that he will grant me the pardon which I desire and which is necessary in order to prevent me being quite discouraged. I count upon a kind letter in reply to give me energy and confidence.

LÉON GAMBETTA,
Advocate.

PARIS, *March 15, 1860.*

I am all alone thinking of the cruel silence with which you are treating me; doubts assail my mind, and I ask myself in fear and trembling if you still love me as in the old days, if you still take an interest in my welfare, if one fault can deprive me of your indulgence? Notwithstanding the seeming hopelessness of your prolonged silence, I cannot believe it, I will not believe it! Your last letter, (I have to go very far back to find it!) notwithstanding its severe tone and the bitter recollections which it brought to my mind, was so full of ill-concealed affection and sound advice that it was quite like a good dose of medicine to me. It reminded me painfully of your hard life as a youth, of your struggles, your doubts, your trials, your labour, your fears, your courage, and finally your success, your victory over ill-luck, your severe but noble and salutary way of looking at events and judging mankind; and I compared myself to you in this picture of the past and present, and I felt in despair. I said to myself that *I* could never have begun and made a position for myself, that *I* could never have risen above the common herd; and my astonishment, mingled with love and admiration, made me hope that you would be indulgent towards me although I had proved myself to be less strong, less upright, less courageous than you. It is more the fault of my generation than my own fault; the previous generation had more independence, more stamina than the present. So the old must have more pity than anger for the young men of to-day, they must be more ready to advise than to blame, more ready to help and love than to reproach and sneer at them. I think, nay, I am sure, that you have forgiven me; but your silence frightens and awes me. Let your heart

speak when you send me your answer ; your reason is too severe when it alone speaks.

Kiss my mother, my sister, and my excellent aunt whom I long to have with me here that, through her, I may be nearer you.*

PARIS, *April 7, 1860.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I avail myself of young Edoux's departure for Cahors in order to reply to your harsh letter of the 2nd inst. You tell me how you succeeded in making a position for yourself and how you brought us up—that is to say, by what privations, sacrifices, and hard work you managed to make both ends meet. Notwithstanding your bad opinion of me, I can understand how, with your experience, you must feel about the matter. So your blame, although severe, did not pain me so very much because it came from you. I have already told you : “ I have done wrong, but I will amend my conduct. I only ask for an opportunity.” You say that you can hardly believe my promises, because I have not yet taken the oath. But if you knew what trouble one has to obtain a minister's signature, you would see that it is not my fault.

Then you speak to me about Maître Dufaure. I can still go back to him if necessary ; but I was dissuaded from doing so by an old man about the *Palais* who told me that Dufaure always had so many secretaries in his office that he could never push any one.

* Joseph Gambetta wished Léon, as soon as he had taken his licentiate's degree, to return to Cahors and to practise there. His mother objected to this plan ; she wanted him to remain in Paris ; his father consented to his remaining on condition that the young advocate's aunt, Tata, Mlle. Jenny Massabie, should follow Léon to Paris, keep house for him, and reclaim him from what the worthy inhabitants of Cahors were pleased to call “ his career as a tavern-hunter.”

I wish I could manage to keep myself ; but believe me, one cannot climb to the top of the tree at the very outset, and I swear to you that I would gladly spare you all these daily sacrifices. . . .

PARIS, May 21, 1860.

MY KIND FATHER,—I have just passed my *conseil de révision*,* and so, having already paid my debt of blood to my country, I am a Frenchman once and for all. Unfortunately I knew that I should be exempted ; if I could have chosen, I should have preferred to serve under the flag seven years and to have the use of my two poor eyes. But Fate, all-powerful in this world, thought fit to strike me. I must be resigned : life is a contest in which resignation promises but does not insure success to the combatant. Do not let us say anything more about this sad incident of which the *révision* reminded me very painfully, if indeed I had ever forgotten it. However, yesterday on seeing the pick of the youth of France gathered in (like they cut down the State forests and gather in the wood) to send to serve as fuel to the fiery furnace of war, it seemed to me that this debt, this tax upon humanity, was very absurd. How useless and ruinous this sacrifice seems and how unworthy to be compared with the devotion and enthusiasm of the Italian volunteers who, under Garibaldi's flag, are now marching with heads and bayonets held high, to save Southern Italy from oppression and absolution !

* *Conseil de révision* : the board that examines the recruits and decides whether or not they are to be admitted into the army. Born in France of a foreign father, Gambetta, on October 29, 1859, made in the presence of M. Bessières, Mayor of Cahors, the declaration enjoined by Article 9 of the *Code civil*, by which he became a naturalised French subject. As he was blind of one eye, the *conseil de révision* declared him unfit for military service.

A report was purposely spread that the brave *Niçois* had been beaten, but it was contradicted this morning; it is he who has completely routed the royal troops of the Neapolitan Bourbon.

I assure you, dear father, that notwithstanding my new position as a Frenchman, an elector and perhaps a future deputy, I consider these brave fellows' struggle as a family cause, something personal, a genuine bond of friendship between them and me. Let us wish them good luck; they are trying to make Right triumphant. That reminds me that I have something to tell you: you may count upon it that I shall take my first degree before the end of the year. But the political situation is getting so uncertain that I wish everything was finished and settled. I am either much mistaken or something serious is brewing. Old Europe is in travail; perhaps she is going to wake up! I trust that we shall soon see genuine principles of patriotism and democracy established in the constitution and honoured all over the country. The Eastern question is coming up again; Austria is going to make a final effort; Italy is in a blaze; perhaps France will soon rouse herself. When the storm bursts, only strong, vigorous trees (and by trees I mean nations), will be able to resist its fury. Let us wait; the hour is about to strike. . . .

PARIS, *June 27, 1860.*

. . . The weather has turned quite fine since the death of Prince Jérôme. One would think that he frightened the sun away, and that his death will assure us a fine summer. On Monday, July 2nd, they intend to give him a magnificent funeral which, thanks to Sisco, I shall be able to see very well. A report had been spread which would justify what I wrote to you in one of my last letters

concerning the public funds; it said that the Government was going to raise another loan; whereupon people, either rightly or wrongly, lost their heads. But we must confess that this news would have been terrible had it been true, for it would have shown the nation that it was on the verge of bankruptcy.

So this morning the *Moniteur officiel* contained two brief lines denying what it was pleased to call a false rumour. God grant that such may be the case; but we are so accustomed to see the Government do exactly the very thing which it has promised not to do, that we neither know what to dread nor what to expect. Meantime Garibaldi is making tremendous strides; he rules the country like a veritable Roman dictator, only it is to be feared that he does not exercise sufficient discrimination in choosing his ministers. That is the rock upon which many a revolution has been wrecked.

I have just received a copy of a Belgian newspaper which is never seen in France, the *Echo du Parlement*, in which I read that a Sicilian in the pay of the Government has tried to poison Garibaldi. Luckily the attempt failed; but the general is unwell; let us hope that it will be nothing.

Have you read Victor Hugo's splendid speech upon the Sicilian expedition?

The weather is improving; one can only work in the morning now. The day will soon come when I shall be able to go up for my examination and then I shall come and see you. Sisco will probably arrive before me. I am going to dine with him to-night, that is to say, the 1st Grenadiers are giving a *fête* this evening; we will drink your health in good Bordeaux wine.

PARIS, *July 2, 1860.*

. . . I have been to M. Valette and persuaded him to examine me ; the result of this preliminary examination is such that I ought not to go up yet as, having made up my mind to pass the examination for a fellowship, I must pass well and not just manage to scrape through or be put back for another year. Vernet also gives me the same advice which he gave to Mme. Arnault's eldest son who has been studying a year longer than me. I must confess, however, that I wanted to go up and take my chance. Perhaps I had too good an opinion of my own powers ; but my friend, M. Valette, was strongly against such a step, and that for two reasons : first, because I ought to know my subject more thoroughly if I want to pass this examination which, if I passed it well, might mean that I should have a very good chance of getting a fellowship in three years' time ; secondly, because professors often make their pupils who are too young to try for a doctor's degree wait a few months that they may have a better chance of success and be able to acquire a greater knowledge of their subject.

I thought of sending you all these remarks, knowing well that you would agree with me, and that you would immediately understand that if one wants to make a stir in the world one must first pass one's examinations ; and to do this, one must study seriously and not trust to luck ; in short, the doctorate is too stiff an examination, especially when one wants to get a professorship, to make it a question of what one knows and what one does not know. I found that six months of special study were not sufficient to get a thorough knowledge of the subject and to be quite sure of oneself ; that is also my tutors' opinion ; I must

concur because their opinion is sensible and rational, all the more so as it does not really put one behindhand for subsequent examinations. I hope that you will approve and that you will send me your reply by return of post ; I am only waiting for a kind letter from you to set off for Cahors, where I shall continue to prepare myself for the next term.

PARIS, *July 29, 1860.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I do not think that you can have read my letter with all the conviction which I experienced while writing it. I was certain that it was best for myself and for my future that I should not try to pass for the doctorate ; my sole reason for not doing so was to prepare myself so that I might take a better place at the examination for the professorship. I had studied and read up my subject, but I did not consider myself sufficiently well grounded to pass my examination with flying colours ; I said to myself that I must work still harder, make myself still more familiar with my subject—in short, postpone the day of battle in order to prepare my weapons. This determination, moreover, was approved by persons extremely competent in legal matters and who considered that this very successful delay would enable me to make long and useful preparations. If I have any enemies, if any envious persons think that by so doing I show that I realise my weak points, I pity them ; but as long as I have the approval of men who know what they are talking about, I shall not worry myself. Envy can never have any terrors for a man who is sure of himself. If you quote B—— as an example, I shall retort that Toulouse is not Paris and never has been Paris ; that the easy-going and indulgent habits of the Faculty in the provinces are known to

every one, while the Faculty of Paris is known for opposite qualities, for austerity and science cultivated to a superlative degree; then in my opinion (I speak without any feelings of conceit) B—— can never serve as an example or a rival; I shall let him alone and shall not trouble myself any more about him. If I needed any examples, I would cite Mme. Arnault's son who is certainly far more intelligent, better educated, and more diligent, and who also, at the advice of Valette, who directed his studies, is not going up for his first examination for the doctorate; and yet he is a year older than I and no sensible person would dream of blaming him; so why should I be blamed?

There is another passage in your letter in which you call me a *wine-shop orator*—I know not who put this idea into your head. This epithet does not anger me; after all it is not so very dreadful: it is simply false and invented on purpose. I have not been to a *café* for three months; so after that they must be very clever people who see you where you don't happen to be!

May he who called me that name regret it; for we ought always to regret unkindness, and your correspondent lied to you.

In short, your letter terrified me; I thought of your anger and of your sorrow while writing it; but I repeat, I cannot see that there is any harm in waiting a few months longer in order to come safe into harbour with flying colours. I hope that you will reflect calmly upon what you say and that you will weigh my determination, and the opinion of men competent in such matters, and that you will allow that it is only jealous people—that is to say, mean, ignorant folk—who can so misconstrue my behaviour and my honourable and sensible intentions

since my aim is to prepare myself for a successful future.

PARIS, *October 7, 1860.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I have tried several times to write you a letter; I have torn up more than one sheet before sending this which I think I shall post. But I have come to the end of my arguments and I can think of nothing to persuade you to write to me. I should never have thought that you could be so severe with me for such a long time! Not one line, not one word have I received for two or three months! Have you forgotten then, or do you only remember, in order to punish me all the more, that your letters are as balm to me—a remedy, a stimulant, a support? that, though they may be severe, your signature endears them to me, makes me forget the bitter tone; and that harsh words, at this distance, lose all their harshness?

Oh! I thought you were more inclined to mercy than to justice; you have been very severe: it is time to forgive me, to judge more leniently the errors of a heart which has never ceased to love you and to be your slave. I cannot bear to think that you no longer love me, that you will always doubt my courage, and that, because you know that I was weak once, you think that I am a coward as you told me one day when you were angry. I won't listen to those horrible suggestions, to those gloomy forebodings. I will still believe you to be my father, a kind father, with a great loving heart and inexhaustible mercy, in spite of all, in spite of myself, in spite of my faults. And then your severity, though it may be excessive, is caused perhaps by your great love for me; I am sure that my absence has grieved you; tell me, confess, it still grieves you, and my life as an

exile in Paris pains you as much as it pains me. Oh! I beg you to write to me, to fill up the distance which separates us, and to let me, through your letters, assist at those sweet evenings in the home where I so ardently long to be, by your side with the good Sisco and the rest of the family. I am sick at heart when I think that I must throw a veil over this delightful picture of home-life and relinquish all this happiness and my dear memories, only to find myself all alone with my books in my little room under the roof.

I send you my kisses and my tears. Adieu.

Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *October 9, 1860.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I did not wish to reply to your letter until I could give you some good news, to prove to you that your letter had imbued me with fresh courage. I hunted all over Paris looking for something to do, but I found nothing. But the proof that I no longer wish to work by fits and starts, is that I want to get some permanent employment which will oblige me to work so many hours a day; you must no longer mistrust your son: he is going to turn over a new leaf, to live like a man, and to support himself by the sweat of his brow.

Well, either by ill-luck or on account of the holidays, I have only had very unsatisfactory offers; a dozen letters are lying on my table; this letter contains a polite refusal; that offers me a place only fit for a nurse-maid; this one makes all sorts of high-flown promises; that one tells me to wait a bit; one and all say, as if they were talking to a child: "Wait till to-morrow!"

Ah! I beg you, dear father, do not discourage me. I need hope and courage—especially hope. In the beginning of all careers there comes a crisis, a moment of despair, an eclipse. Rousseau said, “The sons of the people who have won fame and fortune for themselves always begin, alas! by grieving their parents before they become their *consolation and comfort!*”

I do not aspire to such heights; but I hope from the bottom of my heart that you and my good mother will be brave; that, although you have made such great and terrible sacrifices for me, you will never despair of me and that I shall soon be able to comfort you. This thought that I may some day be able to reward you for all your trouble and all your care gives me strength. It is true that I, like every one else, have felt discouraged, have been thoughtless, wild, hot-headed; my passionate Southern temperament, with its curious mixture of fire and indolence, is answerable for much. But I will tame my fiery nature; I will build fewer castles in the air, and then I shall become, as you wish with so much reason, more sensible and more practical; but, for pity's sake, give me breathing-time. If Fortune, the goddess of life, will only deign to turn her face towards me and let me grasp the hem of her skirt, I swear that I will cause you no more anxiety. Only give me a chance and I will show myself really worthy of you, and will make a position for myself from which fickle Fortune will be unable to drive me. Believe me, I am now old enough to realise and bitterly to regret all the sacrifices and the anxieties which I have caused you; I could cry for remorse when I remember that I have done nothing, earned nothing, realised none of your plans for my future. Rest assured, however, that

it is not for lack of trying but for want of an occasion on which to distinguish myself. My hour has not struck yet. It is true, and I am ashamed to confess it, that I have been weak sometimes; I have been guilty of many and great faults considering what terrible privations you were enduring at home for my sake; but I will make atonement. Alas! I have already atoned in some measure by my exile during the holidays; but I want to make you forget them by my conduct in the future. Believe me: if my thoughtlessness and my broken promises have made you incredulous, wait to believe me until I prove by my actions and behaviour that I have turned over a new leaf. But until then, do not bear spite towards your wretched son; forgive me and advise me, encourage me and hope. To-morrow, perhaps, the sun will pierce through the clouds and I shall be able to seize time by the forelock.

I have not always, it is true, worked with the same clockwork regularity as I am now doing; but I swear to you, and I am not mistaken, that during my bouts of hard work I have learnt, studied, and remembered more than many others much older than myself with all their regular but half-hearted daily studies. I have positively revelled in hard work; but I am obliged to rest sometimes so that I may digest the immense amount of knowledge acquired during these orgies of study. I have perhaps learnt more by this method than by crawling along like an ant. I do not say this out of conceit, but because I am sure of it; I only ask to be allowed to prove my assertions; it is my nature to work like this.

Never have I loved study as I love it now. I beg you to wait patiently and to love me as I love you, as I adore you, all of you. Oh! for mercy's sake, do not

mistrust me : I may be unlucky sometimes, foolish even, but my heart is still in the same place, loving and devoted to the best of fathers, the most saintly of mothers, the sweetest of aunts, and the most affectionate of sisters. *Au revoir !*

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *October 24, 1860.*

MY EXCELLENT FATHER,—A week ago I received your sweet, fatherly letter ; those three pages contained your whole self with that strange mixture of captivating sympathy, irresistible kindness, excellent advice, and rather severe criticism which is peculiar to yourself. I have read and pondered over your letter ; at times I seemed to see you there, before my eyes, with your delicate lips, your broad, smooth white forehead, telling me what I ought to do and yet not discouraging me. I listened to you in silence, and I said to myself that, all things considered, you were right. I was obliged to allow in my conscience, when the illusion had faded away, that constant hard work is the best way to tame fortune and oblige circumstances to obey you. As each tooth of the saw bites into the wood, so each day gives us new strength and drives another obstacle from our path. So I promise to obey my own interests and your exhortations ; I shall doubtless fail many a time, dear father, before I can force myself to work steadily every day ; but when once one has made up one's mind to do a thing (as I have done for your sake) one can always do it. I also think that it is better not to trouble oneself any more about one's so-called friends, for they are all cold-blooded, heartless, selfish brutes who flatter you one day and, on the morrow, turn round upon you and call you

blackguard. But what can you expect? As Molière said, "Envy is a vice which cannot be uprooted." The envious may die but Envy never. One must look out for oneself in this world, choose one's own friends and keep them even if they are not altogether satisfactory; for it is dangerous to be always trying to grasp the moon: one may end by finding that one has only tumbled out of the frying-pan into the fire.

I did not reply immediately to your letter; I was prevented doing so by a terrible event.

Poor Tachard, who lodged on the same floor as myself, was at the last gasp, suffocating in the clutches of death; I had to stay with him and with his poor mother who was quite overcome by this terrible trial. Alas! we had hoped to be able to save him. But he became delirious; the rheumatism affected his heart. He raised himself up in bed as if to call for help, opened his blood-stained lips, and then fell back lifeless. He was dead. I am not sure if I did not pity the mother more than the son. It was dreadful to see that poor old mother kneeling by the side of the corpse, refusing to believe what had happened, denying that he was dead, calling her son by name, uttering most strange and piercing cries, and weeping till her eyes were bloodshot. At last we had to yield to fate, and I sent off the poor mother with her son's body to Montcuq. These sad details remind me of the reproach contained in your letter; I did not tell you of the death of Sisco's mother because I knew that you had already heard of it: I foresaw that her death would revive many bitter memories. I hesitated, for I did not wish even with the tip of my finger to touch the reopened wound lest I should make it bleed. I ought to have thought of your courage; but I only remembered the affecting death

of this patriarchal grandam whose Raphael-like profile comes back to my memory whenever I think of that fairy-land, Italy. Yes, that Italy, that great land of the dead, as Alfieri said, has caused us to shed many tears, for it contains our dead—nay, more! our hearts. For the heart can expatriate itself and lay itself at the feet, or place its hand in the hand of the beloved! Poor dear gray head! Whenever I think of her, I seem to see the smile hovering round her mouth and a tear, one lovely pearl, sparkle in her eye. If we ever again behold her, it is thus that we shall see her; she will be unchanged. She must surely know in her new home how her sons and her grandchildren revere her memory. May our souls be agreeable in her sight! For such is the happiness vouchsafed to the elect in the realms where time is no more.

PARIS, *December 27, 1860.*

MY KIND FATHER,—I did not write to you before because I was expecting a reply from the secretary of the Faculty; some difficulty had arisen concerning the date of the examination for the doctorate. I shall take the chair on the 3rd at midday; we must hope that I shall obtain my first degree on the evening of the 3rd, and that on the evening of the 4th I shall be able to take the train and come to kiss you and wish you a happy new year in person.

It seems to me as if Thursday would never come; I am tired of thinking of it, and I long to make this step, especially when I remember that my reward, when it is all over, will be to return to my family and receive the consolation, indulgence, opinion, advice, and kisses of which you are all so lavish. So I am waiting patiently and I beg you to imitate my example, to watch the ordeal

from afar; and then, when Thursday comes, and you are seated at dinner and the clock is striking twelve, you will be able to say, "Léon is beginning to speak!"

If I only think of it my head begins to reel; but don't be afraid, it will not last. Think of my thesis which I have been rather long writing, but it was the best thing I could do; and let us hope that all will go well at the examination. Kiss the whole family for me; I shall come in time to find your cheeks still warm with those kisses. . . .

Gambetta, at the entreaty of Prosper Vernet, his fellow-countryman, and a professor at the *Faculté de droit*, had begun his studies for the doctorate with a view to obtaining a professorship. He *luckily* failed at his first examination—in Roman law; from that moment his fate was decided: he was to be an advocate, and it was at the bar, for which he was fitted both by his taste, his extraordinary talents, and his inclinations, that Léon Gambetta was to reveal himself as a great orator. His aunt, Mlle. Jenny Massabie, followed him to Paris and there kept house for him. The young advocate now began to settle down. He first became secretary to Maître de Jouy, then to Maître Lachaud; then Crémieux, thanks to Clément Laurier's friendship, took him into his employ. His occupations at the *Palais de justice* did not prevent him taking an ever-increasing interest in all the literary and political squabbles which were then agitating Paris. On the evening of the first performance of *Henriette Maréchal* he enrolled himself under the revolutionary flag of the celebrated *Pipe-en-Bois*.* His first client Buette, Cail's right hand, accused

* *Pipe-en-Bois*: a well-known *chef de clique* who earned this nickname from the fact that he and his followers used a wooden pipe

of being implicated in a secret society case, brought him his first success at the bar ; his name was soon in everybody's mouth. His comrades spoke admiringly of him, and prophesied a splendid future. We find him a frequent visitor to the Chamber and a constant contributor to the *Cour d'Assises illustrée* ; he became not only a popular lecturer at the Molé conference, but at the same time he occupied the posts of newspaper correspondent to the *Europe*, published in Frankfort, and editor of the *Revue politique*, founded by his friends Challemel-Lacour and Brisson. His herculean labours did not prevent him visiting London and the East in company with his friend Laurier. Finally, long before entering Parliament, his electoral influence in the Quartier Latin, in 1863, threw him into the very midst of the political struggle, where he fought with distinction for Jules Favre and Prévost-Paradol.

His letters, with all their habitual good-humour and confidence in the future, will now show us the young advocate's sufferings, fierce joys, and momentary doubts during these first years of struggle. The presence of his aunt Massabie, her truly maternal love for him, explains the deep affection which Léon Gambetta had for her until her death, which occurred in Nice in 1878.

"It was she," a friend tells us, "who in future was to preside over the household of the young licentiate in law. With her good-natured, old-maidish face, her slightly limping gait, she seemed like Léon's mother ; she was on familiar terms with all his friends, who, like him, called her Tata. Once a week Gambetta invited the friends of his childhood — Péphau, Fieuzal, Cayla, Miran, as their weapon when they wished for political reasons to hiss a piece off the stage.

Edoux, Béral, &c., to dinner. . . . He took the oath June 8, 1861.

PARIS, *May 2, 1861.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I snatch a moment in which to write you a few lines of gratitude and information ; of gratitude for all you have done for us, the value of which we only really realise when we have to buy with our own money the necessities of daily life. People cheat us because they know that we are poor ; nevertheless I have been lucky enough to buy two good hair-mattresses for 63 francs, which really was not very dear ; but I cannot afford to buy any chairs yet, so expensive are they ; we are using the armchair until we can find something cheap. The railway company sent the furniture the day before our arrival ; as we were not there it had to be taken away. This cost us 5 francs, the carpenter's bill came to 6 francs, and the hotel was rather expensive ; these expenses are necessary on setting up house, but thanks to you and to Providence we have now got a home,* and we shall only have to spend what is strictly necessary. We shall only drink cold water until you send us some wine ; the latter is very dear here and hardly drinkable—it is better to do without it ; other and luckier people than we only drank water for ten years, and now toss off bumpers off Bordeaux wine ; we must imitate them.

The railway company has made us pay 121 francs 25 centimes for carriage, whereas Cayla's estimate only said 111 francs 60 centimes. I should much like to know if we can get the 10 francs difference refunded ; write and tell me what you think. Everything arrived in good condition and is now arranged in its proper place. Your

* No. 14, rue Vavin.

portrait occupies the post of honour in my study and is a perpetual lesson to remind me of your precepts, and to make me imitate your example. I beg you to believe, my good father, that I am going to turn over a new leaf, and that I shall punctually observe all your advice concerning order and method. Yes, order is the mainspring of life, and I want to prove by my career that I am not deficient in that quality. But I prefer to await events, so that I may be able to prove to you in a more substantial manner my gratitude for your sacrifices and my sincere desire to succeed in life.

I see Vernet every day, for he lives just opposite to us, and he has promised to come and help me work in the evening. I rise with the lark; it is an effort to me to do so, but I shall have got accustomed to it in eight or ten days.

My aunt does not seem to mope much; she comes and goes in our apartment and, although she still regrets your absence too deeply, she tries to forget her sorrow in hard work. I shall ever be grateful to her for the great mark of affection which she has given me in sacrificing her happiness to my welfare; for I know well that her presence here will make me a different man, and study will become my daily bread instead of, as formerly, something to be accomplished by fits and starts. I need not tell you that Péphau has been of the greatest use to us. He begs me to send you all his love.

Sisco is coming to see us on Sunday; he was as pleased as a child to think that he should see you and Benedetta in the month of September. We have been dreadfully busy; Tata has seen nothing, but she will have plenty of opportunities to make up for lost time. . . .

PARIS, May 24, 1861.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Your kind letter found us in good health on our return from Rueil, whither we had gone to spend the day with our good friend Sisco who, as you can easily imagine, did the honours of his home in regal fashion ; we did not leave his house until nine o'clock at night. So now my aunt not only knows Paris but the suburbs also. Rueil and Sisco's apartment in particular are quite charming ; the little suburb is composed of delightfully shady gardens and pretty cottages ; it is just like a little orchard situated at the very gates of Paris. It will now be our favourite Sunday excursion, thanks to the railroad. The dinner was very jolly ; we talked a great deal about Cahors. . . . We were quite surprised to find that night had fallen and that it was time to leave. Two days later your letter arrived blaming both my aunt and me. My aunt did not really deserve her scolding ; as for my share allow me to remark that you are not quite fair ; the *Opinion* is seldom seen in Paris : I have only seen it once in a *café* on the *boulevard* and then it was only an odd copy, so that I fear I shall not be able to see it in time. As to subscribing to it, I must tell you that it costs 75 francs per annum post free ; I shall try and have a look at it in some reading-room. I will let you know if I can get it second-hand for 25 or 30 francs a year. . . .

At last I have good and definite news to tell you : one of the best advocates in Paris, M. de Jouy, has asked me to be his secretary. I went to see M. Valette on the matter ; he said to me : " You will not learn how to speak in public at M. de Jouy's, neither will you learn law, for he knows less about it than you do. But you

will learn the ropes : how to conduct a lawsuit, how to make a *clientèle* for yourself and how to increase it ; in a word you will learn to earn money ; then he will get to like you ; sooner or later—he is a rich, childless widower—he will retire, make you take his place, and so you will be fairly launched.” I told M. de Jouy that I accepted his offer. I begin my duties next month : we shall see. . . .

You mention the oath : it is true that I have not taken it yet. I mean, unless you object, to take it at the end of next month, and this is why : besides the fact that the oath and the *stage** cost 100 francs, all advocates are obliged to deposit every six months a sum of 15 francs for the present half-year, and on July 1st another sum of 15 francs for the coming half-year ; now, if I do not take the oath until July 1st, I shall only have to pay 15 francs for the coming half-year ; so, if I wait a month I shall save 15 francs. Tell me what you think of my idea ; if you do not approve, say so, and I will take the oath at once. But I fancy you will think it best to economise 15 francs.

We were grieved to hear that mama had had such a serious attack of influenza, and we beg you to tell us if she is quite well again.

One of my friends who has just returned from Brussels has given me the Duc d’Aumale’s pamphlet ; but I do not know how to get it to you, for I fear that it may be confiscated by the postal authorities. . . .

PS.—I thank you very much for your kind present, which we really needed, for the bad wine which we were drinking with such care, might perhaps have made us

* *Stage* : period between the admission as licentiate in law and the call to the bar.

ill in the long run. We shall use what you send us sparingly. As to the measurements for the carpet, here they are : the bedroom is 10 by 11 feet. We have bought some very handsome and very strong chairs for a small sum : we really had to get something on which to sit ! We only had the armchair : it was not enough. They are quite nice and the whole six of them only cost 42 francs. A chair is an important matter to a man who leads a sedentary life. I must sit still and wait ; my clients will pay me some day no doubt. . . .

PARIS, June 10, 1861.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have not been able to reply sooner to your letter, for I wanted to fulfil all your commands as to the oath ; for instance, I have had to put my name down, pay visits, go to the registrar's office, in short I spent from eight to ten days in making inquiries ; and Saturday, at half-past eleven o'clock in the morning, I took the oath in the presence of the *Cour impériale* of Paris. M. Jules Favre introduced me to the members of the bar. Sisco, to whom I had written to tell of this event, came to dine with us on the morrow, Sunday, and I read him my "Address to the Youth of Italy on the occasion of the Death of M. de Cavour," which I had drawn up and submitted to the approval of the most competent men in Paris. In a moment it was covered with signatures. The newspapers are reproducing it ; but I wanted to send you a copy so that I might hear your opinion. You will see it in the *Siècle* the day after to-morrow.

I am going to begin to plead at the *Conseil de guerre* * next month, and that will bring me in a few sous while

* *Conseil de guerre* : court-martial.

waiting for M. de Jouy, who is growing more familiar in his manner towards me and who has already begun to give me some cases. All things considered, the future is beginning to assume a more definite shape; I only have to go on. I repeat: count upon me. . . . Setting up house is truly a very expensive operation; and money, even when one is economical, seems to fly; journey, carriage, new purchases, and daily expenses soon make a hole in our little hoard.

The address which I send you was read in private and submitted to the approval of a committee composed of M.M. Bixio (General Garibaldi's brother), Guérault, &c.

THE YOUTH OF FRANCE TO THE YOUTH OF ITALY.

ADDRESS BY LÉON GAMBETTA.

Tantæ molis erat romanam condere gentem!

(VIRGIL.)

Brethren! the Comte de Cavour is no more! Let young Italy, let democratic Europe shed tears of grief! For if the life of this man was great and useful, his end was sublime; it was patriotism which killed him—patriotism, that glorious and all-absorbing malady which only attacks the great. And now we choose, we the youth of France, this hour of supreme sorrow in which to express our bitter regrets, our fondest hopes, our dearest wishes, and to re-echo with deep sympathy and enthusiasm the dead man's cry: "Venice! Rome! France!" It is a revelation for the future, arising fully armed from the tomb.

Yes, blind fate has struck you a cruel blow and robbed you all too soon of the workman whose every effort added one more stone to the edifice, in future inde-

structible, of the national reorganisation. A few more months of life—oh! cruel fate!—and that blessed hand would have opened the gates of the astonished Capitol to resuscitated Italy!

But only cowards allow themselves to be discouraged and flee before the coming storm. One principle alone is immortal: though the man was frail, his work will live after him for ever, and the future appears laden with fair promises.

Truly the fertile land of Italy will not want for able and determined men who will continue and complete the Comte de Cavour's magnificent plans for her future happiness. Genius and heroism are contagious in that chosen land; and in you, the young men of Italy, we have absolute confidence. Do we not know, indeed, that you agree with us that the most beautiful memorial which we could erect to the glory of the great minister, would be to finish his task, to practise ever more diligently those principles of order, mutual aid, self-sacrifice, and civic union which he taught you to prize; in short, to prove to the world that nations really worthy to rule themselves know how to obtain their independence, although they may have to face martyrdom to win it?

Italians, continue to show to the Universe, which is watching and admiring you, the virtues which you have practised for the last two years and then the words of the dying man will come true: "Nothing is lost!"

May the memory of the great dead man, in all events of your political existence, be a lesson and an incentive to work; and if ever a corrupt and hostile party should try to sow discord among you, remember Cavour and keep faithful to Victor-Emmanuel! Let every man who

bears one spark of patriotism in his heart rally round the king; through him alone can you hope to reach Venice: there is no other way. This is what we, the grandsons of '89, wish to say to our Italian brethren but lately sprung from the immortal Revolution which, alone, ought to transfigure the whole face of the world; for Justice alone can work such miracles. So let us say to them: "Show yourselves imbued with revolutionary ardour—that is to say, be calm before the fray—and on the day of battle, do your duty and strike boldly; show yourselves to be a great nation, and then Italy will be safe from all danger. If nations wish to be great they must learn, like heroes have to learn, in the school of sorrow.

L. GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *June 19, 1861.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am very pleased to think that you approve of my address; it has been reproduced by every newspaper in France and Europe; the young men of Italy are going to reply by another address. Last Sunday I went to the Italian Embassy in order to deliver the signatures which I had collected. Victor-Emmanuel's representative gave me an admirable reception; he wished me to leave a copy written and signed by my own hand; then he invited me to dinner in the evening; it was then that I realised what a blessing it is to have a suit of clothes fit for going out in society. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for having given me a complete suit of black clothes before I left home! There were only five of us that evening, on account of the death of M. de Cavour and of the funeral service which was to take place on the morrow at the Madeleine and for which I received an invitation from Grapello whom

I repaid in the following manner: I had told three hundred students to meet me outside the church; and just as Victor-Emmanuel's representative was driving by in his carriage, cries of "Long live Grapello! Long live Italy! Long live Victor-Emmanuel!" re-echoed from the steps of the church to the Embassy. I asked to be allowed to call upon him from time to time, and he very kindly answered, "The Italian Embassy will always be open to you."

Luckily for Italy the important functions exercised by him will soon cease; for the real ambassador is to be M. de Villamarina as soon as the Emperor has recognised the kingdom of Italy. They assure me that its recognition was voted at the cabinet council last Monday. The ceremony in honour of M. de Cavour was extremely significative; the Emperor sent Marshal Vaillant as his representative and the very distinguished company included the ministers, the president of the *Corps législatif*, the privy councillors and the Press, official and otherwise. The officiating priests were the only persons who looked glum; it was really scandalous to see those spiteful creatures obliged to conceal their real feelings while praying for M. de Cavour.

You ask me to tell you some details concerning M. de Jouy; as yet I can only give you my first impressions: I have not had time to see what he is really like and to form an opinion of him; in such matters it is better to wait until one has known a person for some time, or else one may be mistaken. I cannot express to you all my gratitude for what you have done for me, for the sacrifices and proofs of affection which you have showered upon me; and I ought to spend my life in doing good if it were only to show my gratitude for your kindness.

You may be sure that I shall not forget your wise advice to remember *to use to-day as if it were to-morrow*. Fortunes can be made if these words are properly understood and these maxims obeyed.

I have not written yet to M. Dufaure because I was not ready to be introduced to the head of the business as he wished to do: I want to be more familiar with the routine of the *Palais* and the building itself before I go to Dalloz. We must learn to wait. Haste often mars our plans—patience never.

PARIS, July 19, 1861.

What are your plans as to a visit to Paris? I should be all the more pleased to see you during the coming holidays as I am going to appear in several cases, and I should be delighted to do so in your presence. My chief will be my friend in future. I have brought him round to my way of thinking. He told me the other day while I was dining with him as usual: "I promise to get you some cases. I will introduce you to a certain number of solicitors and judges; in short, I wish you to succeed and quickly, too."

So it is probable that I shall plead one of these days; I feel overjoyed at the mere thought of such an event; the feeling it causes is joy not fear. I long to receive baptism at the hands of the members of the bar. We must leave the rest in God's hands. So I thank you, father, and you, my good mother; we are in the right road. Never have I felt such confidence in the future and so much courage in the present.

Now, my dear father, I must speak to you of my private affairs, tell you that, notwithstanding the utmost economy, we have come to the end of our resources; your loans melted away with the purchase of absolute neces-

saries, in travelling and postal expenses, furniture, taking the oath, the *stage*, and the cost of daily living. In short, if you will kindly take the trouble to add this all up, you will see that we shall find it very difficult to pay our rent on July 15th. And then we have eaten up all our macaroni, tapioca, &c.; you see that the supply lasted nearly three months, which is really very good. And as soup is our principal article of diet, it would come much more expensive if we had to buy bread. . . .

PARIS, *July 25, 1861.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I was very vexed by the news contained in your last letter; one of our dearest day-dreams has been dashed to the ground; the shop is not sold, and so you are still prisoners! I could not have had a greater disappointment, for I had long hoped that you would be able to retire from business and live quietly with your family. However, we must make up our minds to wait! It is the only thing to do under these circumstances. As you have not sold the business, I can quite understand that it is necessary to exercise strict economy, and I much regret that it is chiefly my fault that you are obliged to do so; but some day we shall make up for all that.

Things are going on very well here; M. de Jouy is delighted with me; he says so to any one who will listen to him. I shall follow his advice; I believe that my acquaintance with this man will be the making of me. He delights to make everything easy for me. While waiting for success, I beg you to encourage me. Human life is divided into two periods: until thirty years of age the father supports his children and shows them where to tread, and then it is the sons' turn to support their

father's tottering limbs. Give and take—what touching reciprocity !

Sisco is overwhelmed with work : he can hardly spare a moment to come and see us ; I send him your letters as soon as I receive them, and he brings them back to me, and thus we get a chance to see him. I leave you to guess how my aunt enjoys having him with us : one would almost think that he represented the whole family to her. And if we were not constantly speaking of our dear absent ones, we could almost imagine ourselves back at Cahors. She is wonderfully well, she takes long walks ; she is seeing Paris very sedately, in little doses ; she is taking sips at the great city as if it were some valuable wine of some special vintage, and drinking it to the last drop.

PARIS, *July 28, 1861.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I was sincerely and deeply touched on reading and re-reading your beautiful letter ; your kindness and your satisfaction increased my joy at having done something which had pleased you ; your account of the reception accorded by the inhabitants of Cahors to my address caused me real pleasure. I was quite excited on hearing of M. Carbonnel's approbation, and I beg you to thank him for me. Here in Paris, I have received fresh congratulations on account of the reply sent by the Italian students ; but the *Gazette de France* was furious, and immediately hatched out an article condemning the address. I wanted to retort, but I was told that the Liberal Press for some time had ceased to reply to the *Gazette de France*, that the latter newspaper was allowed to dry up and to bellow away all alone in its aristocratic *faubourg*. However, when I insisted, Caraguel of the *Charivari* promised a repartee for the

morrow; and, in fact, next day the *Gazette de France* got a good rap on the knuckles in the bulletin of the *Charivari*.

As to all the kind presents with which you are so lavish, I thank you for the care you have taken. I received the books, the carpet, the statue, and the pictures; I had nothing to pay for the statue and for the books, but the pictures and the carpet cost me 3 francs carriage and 1 franc for commission; total, 4 francs. I cannot make out why it should be so; I send you the bill for carriage.

As to M. Valette's cognac, the Custom House duty was so high that it really ceased to be a present; so in future we had better not make him presents which only cost him needless expense. We have not finished the macaroni, tapioca, &c., which you sent us; however, we are getting near the end, for our meals chiefly consist of *menestra*, which I find agrees with me. We drink about half a litre of wine a day—not much in this great heat. I thank you heartily for the 100-franc note which you kindly sent me: in order to economise in my dress, I am looking for a costumier who will make me a cheaper gown. I should like to be able to save enough out of the 100-franc note to buy myself a *toque*.*

I shall probably begin to plead at the court-martial; that always brings in a few coppers. Sisco is seeing about the matter—that is to say, he is taking no end of trouble. I am going to see him to-morrow, and we shall spend the evening together. He is overwhelmed with work, and cannot find a moment during the week to come and see us. I send him your letters by his

* *Toque*: cap worn by French barristers.

grenadier,* who comes regularly to do our heavy jobs for us.

In my capacity as commissary to the advocates' conference, I had to order dinner for the last day of the old year. As we had a great deal of money in hand, I wanted to do the thing in style; so I went to the *Trois Frères Provençaux*, where Lacoste, junior, introduced me to his chief; between them they drew up a splendid menu. The smallest item, the most insignificant matter, is considered of great importance in Paris; you must always make a row if you want people to take notice of you.

I beg you to thank M. Traversier for his kind messages, to give him my kind regards, and to tell him that M. de Jouy, my chief, is the nephew of the former *savant* during the Empire, and that the nephew is as brilliant and eloquent an advocate as the uncle was an affected prosaist.

PARIS, August 15, 1861.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I avail myself of this public holiday, when the streets are thronged with people and all the advocates have flown into the country, in order to chat with you for a while. The city is very noisy, and everything seems going on exactly under my window. I am glad to be idle, to be able to forget my tumultuous existence for a minute or two, and to let my thoughts fly back to my peaceful home where happiness seems made of silence—a silence that is full of deep, tender emotions. However, I now want to describe my emotions to you; I am to appear next week in a case for my chief.

I make my *début* on Thursday; my heart beats, not with fear, but with courage and confidence; I am in

* Captain Sisco's orderly.

haste to receive baptism at the hands of the members of the bar. I shall never again be so happy as I am now. The first steps in a career have a mysterious charm ; it seems to you as if the earth were trembling beneath your feet, and as if your head were giddy. This vertigo is akin to bliss ; but reason comes, and then everything resumes its natural condition and you sail for the Future's unknown shores. May Fortune smile upon me !

For the last three months I have been listening to all the important, unimportant, and fairly well-known advocates about the *Palais* ; and I can assure you, without any conceit, that I feel most hopeful and much more confident of myself. Six months ago I dreaded to measure swords with these successful ornaments to their profession, but now I experience a new feeling much akin to audacity. However, we must remember Christ's words as paraphrased by Danton : " The kingdom of this world shall belong to the proud and to the unjust."

My chief is very pleased with me ; I now know what he thinks of me ; he is overwhelmed with business and I am indispensable to him ; I shall take his place before another ten years have elapsed, if he will let me. Meanwhile I must wait, take small cases, and get accustomed to the life. The worst is over ; I have made my way into the citadel ; it is only a question of time and then I shall be master.

Sisco has petitioned the Emperor to give him the command of some imperial palace ; the Colonel handed his petition to the Emperor while the latter was at Vichy, and we have every reason to believe that the Emperor's reply will be satisfactory. I hope so from the bottom of my heart.

To-day my aunt is going to see the fairy-like illumina-

tions in Paris and she will write you her impressions. Until then, she begs me to send you her best love. Her health is splendid; mine is equally good, and, notwithstanding the extreme heat, we think it our duty to pity you deprived of ice during the dog-days at Cahors. . . .

PARIS, *September 8, 1861.*

I plead every week at my own request; as all the advocates are in the country, young men who are anxious to get on and who have remained in Paris take any odd jobs which they can pick up during vacation.

I have already pleaded three times, once in the Civil Court and twice in the Criminal Court; I was as happy as I could be. I obtained two acquittals; I was especially pleased with the second; my chief and several old stagers who happened to be present congratulated me! I am in the seventh heaven of delight! and I only ask to be allowed to plead again so that I may be able to get quite used to it, for it will only be when I feel thoroughly sure of myself and when I know that people listen to me, that I shall be able to show what I can do. With a little good luck I shall make my mark in the world. I shall have to wait a little longer for this, but it won't be for long.

The vacation judges are beginning to listen to me and to let me speak; when I first began they used to interrupt me, now they behave better. In another month I shall be better known and then they will notice me.

When the Chambers reassemble, I shall be ready to begin a good year of hard work. I thank my lucky star every day. I never thought I should get on so well, and in future I am sure that, after I have pleaded two years for glory's sake, my fortune will be made and I, too,

shall receive the reward of my labours—fame and fortune.

Meanwhile, I read, I write, I reflect, I listen to good masters, I work in order to become an orator; and I give you my word of honour, if energy, a desire to succeed, encouragement from my seniors, and the ambition necessary to the beginning of every career can help me to succeed, you can count upon me: I shall reach the goal.

My chief is away just at present; I am managing his business during his absence. I have the run of his library which is well stocked, and I am making the acquaintance of his numerous clients.

A short time ago he sent some game to one of his relations in Paris, while at the same time he asked him to invite me to his house. This enabled me to become acquainted with this family, the head of which was formerly president of the Paris Court of Justice. I do not know what made you think that M. de Jouy was stingy; he is very generous and affectionate and does his best to help me on. He gives me far more than he gets. I shall win fame and fortune if I stay with him. So put that idea out of your head and trust in good luck which will no more fail me than it failed you when you had to bring us up. I embrace all the others through you. Your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, October 25, 1861.

I am hard at work and I plead daily; every day I make a step forward. I really reaped a miraculous harvest with the last step: I obtained two acquittals at the *tribunal correctionnel*, and last Sunday I made my first appearance at the court of assizes in a case of forgery when I had a

genuine success. Several old lawyers complimented me and, on the morrow, without any warning, I found an account of the case in the *Gazette des Tribunaux*, which was a handsome reward, especially for a beginner; I am sending it to you this evening at the same time as my letter.

I noticed a singular fact during the debates at the court of assizes, and that is: that, thanks to knowledge gleaned in old days at the court of assizes at home, I was able to speak with all the necessary assurance and to manage the witnesses without any trouble.

I remembered all my childhood's memories of Cahors when I used to play truant at the *Palais de justice* of that town; on Saturday last the fact that I had often shirked school in order to listen to Maître Périé Cléophas or some other learned judge, was of the greatest use to me, so true is it that nothing, not even an apparently futile thing, is without its uses.

PARIS, October 31, 1861.

M. de Jouy is coming back next Monday; that means that we shall be more busy than ever; but don't be afraid, I have never been happier and more contented than when surrounded by my briefs. It seems to me as if a pungent odour of restless intelligence exhaled from those yellow documents; it gets into my head and makes me work harder than ever. Each file of papers represents an adversary, each page a weapon: we must break the weapon, overthrow the enemy. Nothing is so invigorating as a battle, because victory is the sweetest of all joys.

Victory! that is the talisman which drives away sleep, strengthens the arm, increases and sharpens

young men's wits. Victory! the word and its meaning would suffice to change a dwarf into a giant.

So, fear nothing: every day brings us nearer to the goal; a few more years of practice, and I shall become quite at home. And then! and then! . . .

I prefer to say nothing and to study while I wait. We can always count the successes and the stumbling-blocks at the end of the chapter.

I promised to send you the newspaper containing an account of my case; I could not get it before to-day; I hasten to send it to you: it does not contain the speech at the bar, but you will understand from the indictment that it was something to be able to prove that the accusation of forgery was false and to get my clients off with only five years' imprisonment. I send it to you to prove to you that I am getting on.

. . . I will now describe our new apartment to you; it is on the first floor; the landing is rather nice and well ventilated; there are some big trees outside the house; the rooms are fairly good and clean; the mantel-pieces are very handsome. The hall serves as a dining-room and an ante-chamber; then comes our drawing-room, which is at the same time my study, then your son's bedroom, then Tata's room where I have placed the chest of drawers; behind these four rooms is a long, newly papered and wainscotted passage where we have nailed some pegs on which to hang our clothes; the dear little kitchen is at the end of this passage and is lighted from the staircase. The cellar is big enough to hold two or three casks of wine; at present it only contains packing-cases; I wanted to sell them, but I was offered such a ridiculously small sum of money for them that I preferred to keep them until I could

get more. Water costs us a sou a day ; you see, everything has to be paid for in Paris. I have bought two jugs in which to keep it. The beautiful vases which you sent us look very handsome on the drawing-room mantel-shelf ; unluckily the one which had a glued pendant came unglued during the journey, so I beg you to tell me how I can mend it with gum, for the piece is whole.

All the rooms are tiled, which is very nice in the summer ; but Paris is a cold place, and next winter they will not be so comfortable ; between this and then I will send you the measurements for the carpet. We spent five hours at Bordeaux.

PARIS, November 24, 1861.

I told you about the Press case in which I appeared a fortnight ago with Maître Picard, a deputy at the *Corps législatif*, whose acquaintance I made that day, an acquaintance which, I trust, will last for ever.

Judgment was given four days ago, and we were delighted with the result : two months' imprisonment and a fine of 1,000 francs.

But I won't enter into any details, because I think the whole case is going to be printed, and then I shall be able to send you a copy. But I was very pleased with myself ; everybody congratulated me except the President who called me to order on one occasion ; I replied rather sharply, and there the matter ended.

This case has done me a great deal of good with my colleagues : it has made them notice me, and yesterday I was introduced at a dinner party at a friend's house to Emile Ollivier, deputy for the Left at the *Corps législatif* who, after having complimented

me, begged me to consider him as my friend. I think that things are looking up; in fact, I am sure of it. . . .

As to the photographs, I thank you for sending them to me; one loves to be surrounded at least with the portraits of one's dear absent ones: my mother's portrait is as clear and successful as Benedetta's is indistinct, unlike and altogether a failure; it is nothing but a black daub. So we will have another and a better one taken of her when she comes to Paris.

As to the box of macaroni, it simply means a provision of good health and happiness for the coming winter; many, many thanks! But I was particularly grateful for the Parmesan cheese; every meal reminds me more acutely of my home, so true is it that life is made up of little things.

PARIS, *December 2, 1861.*

I have just been made a member of the greatest conference in Paris: the Molé conference, among whose members we find the names of such great men of the present day as the ministers Billaut and Jules Favre. Though it is simply a meeting of advocates, it is quite a miniature political assembly with Left, Right, and Centre parties; we discuss nothing but schemes for new laws. All the politicians in France have been educated in this assembly; it is a veritable school for the rostrum. I was received without much trouble, and I hope before very long to make some speeches which will help me to become known. I sit on the Left in accordance with my political opinions. It cost me 34 francs, but that is little in comparison with the valuable advantages which I expect to derive therefrom. I appeared at the Court of Assizes for the chief of a band of thieves who had already been convicted six times for the same offence.

The President praised me. I got my client off with nine years' hard labour, which all my friends thought quite a success for me. I appear to-morrow in an important case of forgery which I owe to an old representative of the people in Paris: Maître Colfavru, with whom I have become acquainted during my sojourn in Paris; he is very intimate with Favre, with whom I have determined to become better friends before many weeks elapse. I must get to know all of them; I am already on good terms with Picard and Ollivier, both of whom are advocates and colleagues of Favre in the *Corps législatif*. My Press lawsuit was of the greatest use to me, and I hope soon to get another; they have promised to let me appear in a Parisian newspaper case, the *Actualité*, which has just been distrained. These political lawsuits have a twofold advantage in that they educate you, stimulate your energies, and help you to bring all your knowledge of history and politics into the discussion; secondly, the newspapers with one accord make it their duty to point you out; and even if you get no fees, at least you are paid in notoriety. And that is just what I am most keen upon at present!

I was commissioned to draw up for M. Berryer (for whom we are making a subscription in order to present him with a gold medal) a rough outline for an address which we are going to give him on the 25th inst., the eve of the day when the *conseil de l'ordre* gives a huge banquet at the Louvre in honour of the fiftieth anniversary of his *début* in the legal profession.

I will send you these two documents in proper time and place. The first is inscribed at the head of the subscription for the medal which the young advocates who cannot afford to assist at this banquet (the tickets

for which cost 40 francs) wish to present to him; 40 francs are too much for our slender resources. . . .

PARIS, December 10, 1861.

. . . Vico says that life is a circle, the two extremities of which are joined by death. This sad thought is the beginning and the end of all human science concerning life and death. After all, philosophers do not know much more than any one else about the matter; and they wriggle out of a tight corner by explaining everything by metaphors; it is far easier to describe than to prove. But I am wandering from my subject; I hasten back to the high-road—I mean ordinary subjects—such as politics, for instance. We are in a nice scrape and God knows how our rules are going to get us out of it! What with the deficit, constant rumours of war, general scarcity of business, the ever-increasing number of bankruptcy cases, all the different leaders lifting up their heads and getting ready for the coming elections, Europe tossing about on her bed and trying to rise in order to upset things generally, it would not be surprising if all the machinery were put out of order; such events are enough to make sober-minded people reflect.

A propos of the deficit in the finances of the State, let me make a remark. You remember that I told you, just about this time last year or a little later, in the month of January, that the finances of the State were in a bad way, that the deficit, which then amounted to nearly three thousand million francs, was growing larger every day, and that, notwithstanding all our ministers' lies, we were on the brink of ruin and bankruptcy? You would not believe me; you shrugged your shoulders

and said: "It is impossible! The Emperor is clearer sighted than all of us put together." Well! was I right? Was the Emperor so clear-sighted after all? and did M. Fould surprise him, yes or no, when he proved to him that nearly three thousand million francs were required to restore the equilibrium?

PARIS, *December 30, 1861.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—Yet another year is disappearing, fading away into the past! Time calmly turns over one more page of the book of life! How quickly time flies and yet how slow we are to notice its flight!

A few minutes ago I was musing over the fire before taking up my pen to write to you, my mind wandered and I asked myself all sorts of strange questions. I said to myself, "What good are the years? Why did men divide and measure time into equal spaces? Would it not be better to live without pausing, so to speak, without counting the months and years, to drift down the stream of life as on the bosom of a broad river, gently, without stopping, like a ship which has broken free from its moorings? In short, what would happen if the years did not exist? We should live without thought for the morrow; it would be easier to forget; our minds would not be burdened with sad and painful dates; life would seem longer and we should only measure time by our infirmities and the gradual decline of our natural forces." But this dream lasted only a moment, and reason soon proved to me that it is a splendid thing for man to be able to know the term of his natural existence, to number past centuries, to teach history with the aid of the calendar and to record the present. And then a final and very sensible thought

crossed my brain : "In short," said I to myself, "is it not a good thing that there is a space, an interval, between each year which forces man to look back down the road along which he has just come, in order to think of all that he has left behind him, so that the dawn of each new year may be sanctified by friendship and family affection and that the first beams of the New Year's sun may shine on the kiss of peace and universal love?" And then I began to write to you first, my dear father, to tell you how grieved I am, how sincerely I regret that you cannot clasp me in your arms to-day. But these beautiful dreams, these happy thoughts are only passing impressions; regret remains when I look round my room and when through the frosted window-panes I only see the gray sky of Paris grinning at me and seeming to say, "There, down in the South, my brother, is a land which is still warm and visited by the sun."

But such is fate: in the struggle for existence we must learn to bear the absence of our dearest ones, or else we shall fall a prey to that terrible malady, home-sickness, which crushes the life out of its victims and throws them back lifeless on the desert sand. I am resigned and I am waiting patiently but confidently for the day when we shall meet again and be able to tell each other all our wishes, all our desires, without the help of pens and paper. Who knows? Perhaps the happy day is not very far distant. Thanks to you, thanks to your efforts, to your sacrifices, behold the dawn of that beautiful day! With the beams of the midday sun I shall come and see you; with my arms round your neck I shall cry, "My father, you are the author of all my good fortune; the best way of proving

my gratitude to you is to come in person to share it with you."

And you, my sweet mother, what do you think of all these beautiful dreams which may be realised to-morrow? Oh! I can see you from here; I know your heart: it is a book in which I have often read, which I well remember. This is what you say, "I need rest; I am entitled to it by my life of hard work and probity; but my son is not yet sufficiently advanced along the road to success to let him walk alone; therefore I no longer feel weary. I will not rest until he has reached the goal, and so I devote myself entirely and completely to his future." That is what your heart says and many other things besides.

And if you could hear mine, what would it say? Oh! it would have to speak to you for many a long hour if it wanted to describe all its love and gratitude; but one word suffices: I never think of all this maternal love without shedding a tear. There are certain deeds of generosity which can only be repaid in this manner.

And you, my laughing, happy, kind and sensible sister, you think very often, I am sure, of your brother, of that terrible Léon who only writes to you when the old year begins to wrest the pen from his fingers. You are quite right: I am incorrigible. But let me add that I am heartily ashamed of myself, very repentant, and that I should like to write a long, long letter every month; but what can I do? I have no time, and the demon of hard work digs his spurs into my ribs and yells, "Go on!" I protest and cry, "But what will my sister say? What will she think? I no longer write to her!" "What are you afraid of?" retorts the demon, like the very imp of Satan that he is. "Your

sister knows you and she treasures in her heart all the most beautiful letters in the world written by you and which she can read at her leisure ! ”

And the demon is not so very far out after all, is he, Benedetta ? You know me so well that you can guess what passes in my heart, and you only have to open your heart, like a golden *escritoire*, to read all my thoughts, that is to say, all my own heart ? You will add this scrap of a letter to all the others which I ought to have written to you and never did, but which you have been able to read in imagination, thanks to the above ingenious and charming arrangement ; and you will excuse your good brother who loves you fondly, wishes you a thousand, thousand blessings and only regrets one thing, and that is, that he can only send you a tame, brotherly kiss on this stupid sheet of paper.

And now you three, all that I love on earth, be happy, love each other, love me, and accept all the wishes, kisses, and sighs of your absent son and brother, Léon, to whom Paris will still seem for some time a place of exile as long as he cannot have you with him.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *January 3, 1862.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of the four coupons which you sent me. We had not got a single farthing in the house when they arrived.

It was quite a simple matter to go to the company's office and to get them to pay the said coupons ; but here bad luck was lying in wait for us.

First of all they gave us a bond which reduced the value of each coupon of the *Compagnie Lyon-Méditerranée* from 7 francs 50 centimes to 7 francs 30 centimes, which

makes 29 francs 20 centimes. Secondly, they cannot pay us until the afternoon of the 8th inst. ! And between this and then we shall have to blow on our fingers to keep them from freezing !

Really it is a nice way to begin the new year ; this morning I had to borrow 5 sous in order to get myself shaved before appearing in court. . . .

PARIS, *January 8, 1862.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I thank you for your kindness in replying so quickly to my letter, and I am very sorry that I grieved you ; but, you see, there comes a time when necessity gets the better of you and the pen thrusts itself between your fingers and you sometimes dash off a letter without thinking what effect it may produce. However, my fears are allayed ; the railway company consented to pay our coupons yesterday. But I must warn you, lest people should want to give you similar coupons in payment of any debt, that you had better deduct 6 sous off each coupon—the company always deduct 6 sous when the coupon falls due. I cannot understand why there should be any difference between the value inscribed on the back of the coupon and the actual sum paid by the company ; it makes them look as if they gave with one hand in order to take back with the other. I am quite of your opinion concerning these huge, grasping companies, veritable rulers of the universe ; the railways, canals, and principal rivers ought to belong to the State or rather to the nation ; but if we touched that stone we should have to alter the whole edifice.

I fancy that I have got rather a good piece of news to tell you : North America is said to be going to release the South American commissioners, therefore peace will

not be disturbed for a long time—at least, not in that quarter.

The stocks seem likely to rise ; everything else seems looking up.

And then the Emperor's speech on New Year's Day made the Bourse steadier and funds have gone up considerably. As to New Year's Day, it was depressing in Paris ; there was very little going on ; the weather was awful, and colds lay in wait for any one who was brave enough to venture out of doors. Just at present I am enjoying a heavy cold, and I do not know if I shall be able to appear on Friday at the first chamber in a rather important case which the president has entrusted to me.

I will send you a letter early next week telling you how it went off ; I must confess that I, who am not easily affected, already feel a little nervous ; but in the presence of such an audience and with such an adversary as *Maitre Nicolet*, who is one of the foremost advocates in the Civil Court, I do not feel fear, but that strange, vague feeling which oppresses one when one walks at night in unfamiliar paths in unsafe places.

But I shall have time between to-day and the day after to-morrow to pluck up courage ; and then, when I am at the bar, I shall think of you and of the others and my courage will be redoubled. . . .

PARIS, *January 26, 1862.*

. . . I think that the last time I had the all too rare pleasure of chatting with you, I left off my letter just as I told you that I was going to appear on the morrow in an important case in the first Chamber of the Court of Appeal. Well ! to tell the truth, I was not content with my performance. The stern magistrates, the solemn

silence which reigned in the court, and the severe character of the whole affair made me feel nervous; it was with great difficulty that I was able to keep my head, and I did not get over my nervousness until I was nearing the end of my speech; added to that, the case, which Jules Favre had entrusted especially to my care, was hopeless, and my antagonist, Maître Nicolet, one of the greatest and most redoubtable advocates in Paris. In short, I lost my case; I rushed out of court in a temper, and was angry when my colleagues wanted to congratulate me.

But I had my revenge a few days later; you saw in the newspapers that the opinions uttered by me before the advocates' conference had won the day.

I wanted to get my revenge and I can assure you that it was complete. I made a capital speech, and in such matters I trust to my own evidence rather than to that of other people.

I squashed my opponent; the laughter and applause which re-echoed alternately through the court only redoubled my ardour; and then I swung along like a pitiless executioner, demolishing all their objections and establishing my right indisputably. Then, abandoning the subject, I showed the sublimity of the principle which I was defending as proclaimed by history, and I concluded by comparing the France of to-day with the France of '89, and this comparison put the finishing touch to my success. M. Jules Favre congratulated me in magnificent, almost exaggerated terms. For once I was content: I had said all I wanted to say. One thing alone was wanting to make me completely happy and that was your presence.

Next Saturday I am going to replead another issue and

I hope I shall acquit myself equally well. Everything is progressing favourably. So day is dawning; when will the sun appear?

To-day the Emperor uttered his speech for the opening of Parliament; it is nothing but a tissue of lies from beginning to end. And what is remarkable in such a man, for the first time in his life he eats humble pie; towards the end he seems to be excusing his conduct and, by God! I believe he even ends up with a prayer!

As to the report of Fould, the Minister of Finance, it is simply odious; they won't put a stop to their foolish extravagance; and they continue to levy new taxes. Whither are we drifting? I dare not think.

. . . Italy's finances are in a bad way, and I am sorry for her; I hope, however, that things will improve; but I fancy that they will stay as they are for some time, because the horizon looks very black towards the Po and the Adige. I think that Venice will soon have her hands full, and it is to be feared that the cannons may go off by themselves! Everything will go well provided that Piedmont does not fire first; the cabinet of Turin must entice Austria and make her declare war, but it must also be very careful to appear the victim, the offended party.

I have been told by some one who knows (and you will read it in the newspapers within the next three or four weeks) that the evacuation of Rome by our troops was resolved and ordered. The Pope, or rather the Catholic reaction, is unmanageable; and notwithstanding the somewhat silly phrase contained in to-day's speech, you can take it for granted that I am well informed.

It goes without saying that this is only for your ear. During the last month I have reaped a splendid harvest of useful and influential acquaintances, including Arago

and Bixio, General Garibaldi's brother with whom I sometimes spend the evening.

I hope within the next few days to be invited to Jules Favre's house; I have been promised an invitation and I am waiting impatiently for it. I won't say what I hope to do when I have got my man under my thumb, but you can guess. . . .

My aunt is a real marvel of good health, vivacity, and rejuvenescence; it is strange: if things go on as they are now, you will find when you come to Paris that she has become a girl of twenty again. Paris has acted like a fountain of youth upon her; she is growing younger instead of older.

February 14, 1862.

I had a great success at the last conference, which took place a fortnight ago; Favre praised me tremendously. But all that was nothing in comparison with the success, the delight which I experienced last Monday. A meeting of eighty advocates takes place once a year at the *Palais* under the presidency of two seniors. On Monday, the 10th, our company of eighty met under the presidency of Maître Crémieux and Maître Lachaud. The rights and duties of advocates were discussed. Now that day I had all the honours of the *séance*; to make a long story short, during this meeting which lasted one and a half hours, I made two speeches, each of which lasted three quarters of an hour. It would be conceited and impossible to tell you what the *père* Crémieux said in my praise. At last, at the conclusion of the meeting, the *père* Crémieux (no one calls him by any other name) came up to me, shook my hand, and embraced me! He wanted to know my name, my age, and where I was born; he congratulated me, predicted a most brilliant

future for me, and invited me to go and see him regularly. Tears came into my eyes; I was intoxicated with happiness, and you can guess how cheerful we were that evening while dining with Sisco who had come to see us. We only lack one thing; but that one thing means nearly everything to us in our present existence: I mean our family!

February 25, 1862.

I send, as a sample of the *séances* at the Senate, a copy of the *Moniteur* containing a complete report of Prince Napoleon's magnificent speech. It is full of fire, enthusiasm, and absolutely democratic opinions. I send you this number, so that you may see that the *Moniteur*, of all the newspapers, gives the most complete and interesting account of the *séances* in the Chambers and reproduces all the debates, whereas the other newspapers, with their varied information, can only give extracts. You will read it and tell me what you think about it. And then politics look blacker every day. There are curious sounds of cracking all around us. Who knows whether the time of which Christ spoke has not come? One thing is certain and that is: that the nation is restless and that the state of general embarrassment all over the land, the debates in the Chambers and the industrial and financial crisis, make the horizon look very dark. It is time to heave the lead, to find out where we are and whither we are going. A change is certainly coming. God grant that it may be for the best!

I will write to you in a few days to tell you if I have to go into the provinces to appear in a rather important Press lawsuit. I have received no reply but I am told that I may hope to get the case.

PARIS, *March 17, 1862.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—When you read this letter, you will have already received the family's kisses and good wishes; but I must have my share of happiness and kisses on this sweet anniversary. I am already with you in imagination and at times the dream seems to become reality! Unluckily the vision fades and I find myself seated with my aunt beside the fire, she sewing, I writing.

If I have one wish to send you, it is that I may be able to be with you as soon as possible, to be able to tell you by word of mouth all my feelings, my daily struggles and successes, like those which I experienced last Saturday night at the advocates' great conference. They applauded me; I was intoxicated with my success; they almost carried me in triumph; never have I been more happy; every one congratulated me at once; every hand was stretched forth to grasp mine, "to thank me for the pleasure which I had given them," they said. I was crazy with joy, and that happy state still continues while I write to you. I am delighted and I send you my success, my joy, that it may be like a beautiful bouquet for your birthday.

PARIS, *April 12, 1862.*

. . . What shall I tell you of my success? Everything is going just as I could wish it to go: yesterday I obtained an acquittal which pleased me immensely. A poor old woman had been prosecuted for causing the death of a little child who had been confided to her care; her great age, her poverty, her innocence (in which I firmly believed) had made me very anxious to get her off. I defended her with all my might, and I was lucky enough

to get her acquitted to the great delight of my hearers, many of whom were so touched that they cried.

Oh! believe me, such happiness is not to be bought for love or money. I will reserve one such spectacle for the day when I shall have you with me in Paris. Meanwhile excuse me if I do not write more frequently; I am overwhelmed with work, and my family is the only thing which can make me leave it for one moment. Goodbye. Kiss every one for me. *A bientôt!*

CHOLET, *Good Friday*, 1862.

MY DEAR FATHER,—You are doubtless much surprised to see on opening this letter my new address, and you ask yourself, “Where is he? and what is he doing there?”

Now, as I like to answer everything, even at a distance, I will tell you that I am at Cholet in the department of Maine-et-Loire, 300 kilometres from Paris, where I am to appear in a very grave and very important lawsuit before the civil court of that town.

Cholet is a sub-prefecture, but it is a little larger than Cahors. It is a manufacturing town; thanks to its manufactories, its population is quite considerable. I owe to M. Vernet’s friendship the fact that I am appearing in this case which I will tell you all about upon another occasion; it is a lawsuit between two of the richest manufacturers in the town and 800,000 francs are at stake.

I appear to-morrow at nine o’clock in the morning; the whole town will assist; I will write to you in the evening and tell you my news. So I am on the battlefield at last; I meet my adversary to-morrow. He is an

advocate from Angers. I appear for the plaintiff. I speak first, and I promise my adversary a hot time.

Goodbye until to-morrow ! I embrace you ; I will add that, if I were not sustained by the prospect of a battle, I should be dull here, for Cholet is a very sleepy place.

PARIS, June 27, 1862.

I see my way better every day ; I am on the very best terms with all the most influential politicians and persons about the *Palais de justice* ; I have free admission to the *Corps législatif*, the session of which closed to-day after a splendid speech from Jules Favre on Mexico, which was universally admired, even by the Government's most infatuated supporters. Jules Favre has chosen me to appear in the most important political lawsuit, a secret society case, of the whole year—the accused number fifty-four. I shall appear in company with all the most illustrious names in the *Palais* : Ollivier, Favre, Arago, Picard. I could hardly contain myself with joy, and I thanked him cordially ; the case comes on Monday week, July 7th.

Benedetta continues her sight-seeing which she highly appreciates ; by the time you get here, she will already be able to act as your guide. She remembers everything, even to the roads she has to take, and she will make a charming cicerone. My aunt, who accompanies her during her walks, can scarcely keep pace with her ; my sister, with her long legs, would outwalk even a mountaineer ; and I know few people like you and her who never feel tired after walks, which are more like long journeys than an ordinary stroll. It is needless to tell you that we long to embrace you, to have you with us, to walk with you—in short, to be with you !

PARIS, *July 26, 1862.*

For nearly a month I have been unable to call my time my own : I have been completely engrossed by this secret society case. But then, what a success I had ! The court seemed to have gone mad ; all the Liberals at the *Palais*, and, in fact, all over the city, praised and congratulated me and sent me their visiting-cards. But it was at the *Palais* especially that my success was most complete. The old advocates embraced me after my speech, while all the youngsters crowded round me in order to shake my hand. I was intoxicated with joy ; I did not know to whom to reply, so eager were they all to congratulate me ; so I thanked them collectively. What splendid fellows the members of the Paris bar are ! How wonderfully united they are ! and how quickly one makes friends with them ! But let us go back to the lawsuit. I think I may say that if you could read my speech you would be proud of your son. Only there is one obstacle in your way : the newspapers *did not dare* to reproduce it. And that is the whole truth of the matter. However, I had on my side two very powerful advertising agents in the persons of M.M. Crémieux and Arago, who made it their pleasure and their duty to repeat my speech to all their friends ; so that before the week was out every one who cares anything for Democracy or Liberalism knew all about it. Finally, last Sunday, at M. Crémieux's house whither I had been invited, that good old man introduced me to his friends and the following little scene took place. Crémieux said, " Let me introduce to you Maître Gambetta, who has just had a great success in the case of the fifty-four." On hearing this terrible apostrophe, I wanted to beat a retreat, and I said, " How can you expect people to believe you, *maître* ? There were forty

advocates present, and I only came in for the share of the majority, that is to say, Silence!" "Ah!" replied a gentleman who was present, "when one has M. Crémieux's memory one can get on very well without a newspaper, and last night your *maître*, as you call him, recited the whole of your speech to us after the sitting." "Then I must not be surprised," I answered, "if you thought it eloquent reproduced by such a mouth!"

Whereupon M. Crémieux tweaked my ear, saying, "Jealous fellow!" with an indescribable expression of cunning on his clever face. I also send you the opinions of several advocates who appeared in the same lawsuit as reproduced by the *Progrès de Lyon*, which is published in Paris. I hope that you will like what a certain anonymous author writes in the latter paper. They assure me that the *Gironde* and the *Phare de la Loire* have also mentioned me; but that matters little to me. What I really wanted was to win success at the *Palais* among my colleagues, and that is just what I did; to-day every one is on my side.

I will send you my speech as soon as possible, but the reporter who took it down has not sent it yet; as for me, I only have some notes, and not the speech itself. However, they talk of printing the report; in which case I will send you a copy. This morning I received a letter from Sisco who is very well, is consoling himself for having to retire by enjoying his pension, gives me news of all his family and begs to be remembered to you.

The rumour that elections will take place in the month of October is taking a more likely appearance of truth; M. Pelletan has written an article on the possibility of such an event; after hearing Arago read my speech, he

sent me his visiting-card with a message on the back to the effect that if he were prosecuted, he would have no other advocate than Maître Gambetta to defend him. I tell you this, not out of vanity or vainglory, but because I know how it will please you. And then, if you knew how these successes encourage one, and rouse one's enthusiasm and ardour!

But my happiness still needs something to complete it. Come as soon as possible, and then I shall have everything I want; and then, what is more, you will be able to hear a fine speech which will be all the finer if you are present. . . .

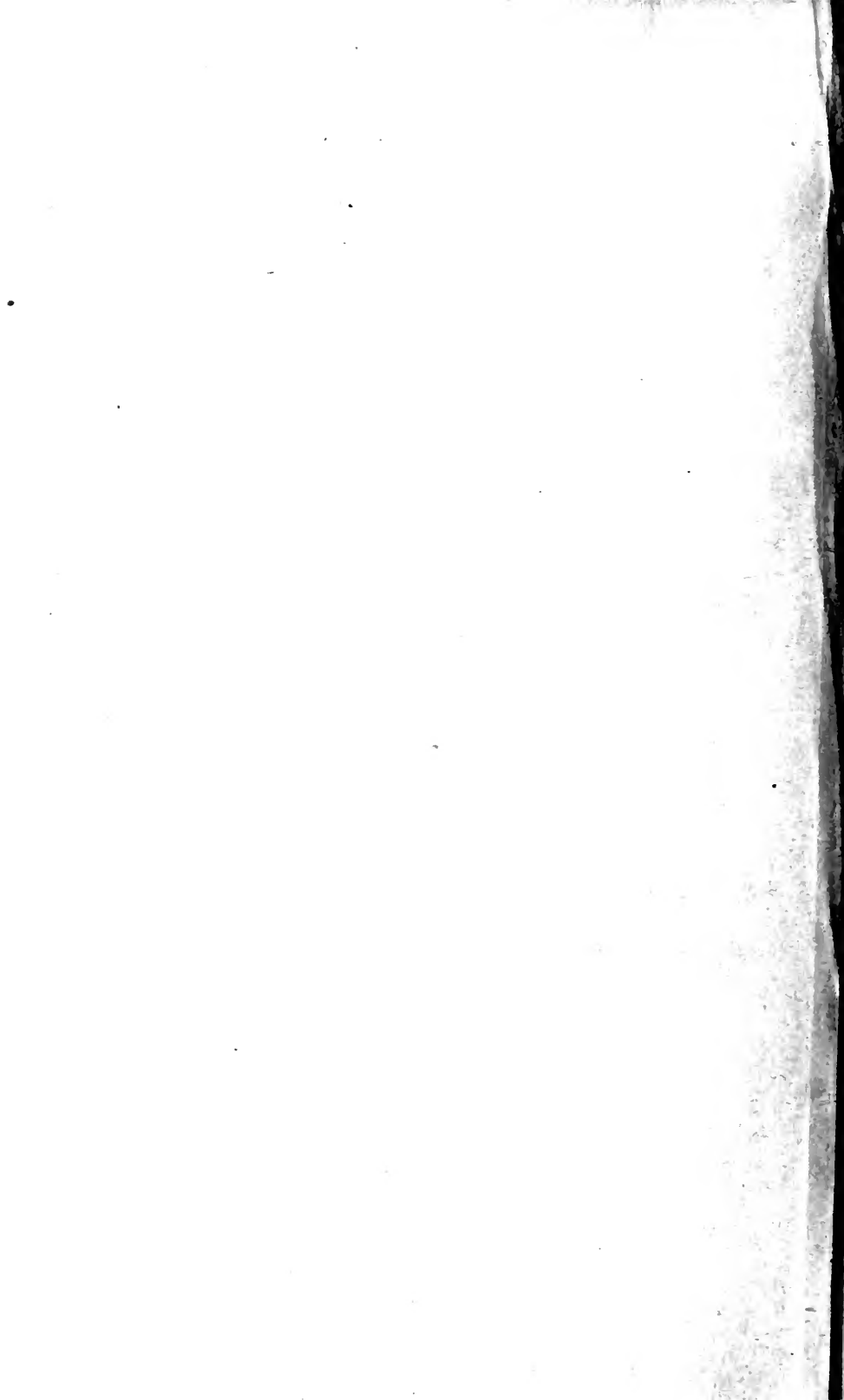
This is how E. Carjat recounts in his *Souvenirs* the story of the first photograph which was ever taken of Gambetta:—

“I shall always remember that summer morning—it was in 1862—when he came for the first time ‘to bring me his head,’ as he called it, in my studio in the rue Laffitte. He strolled in the garden while waiting to be photographed and picked daisies, the petals of which he plucked off one by one like a sentimental schoolgirl. He put one in his buttonhole and then asked to be taken with this floral decoration. I cannot look at that photograph without immediately remembering his almost childish glee while he examined the proof which represented him as a slender, unaffected young fellow in all the manly beauty of his twenty-fourth year.

“ ‘Thanks to you, I shall break many hearts,’ said he to me. ‘Don’t forget that if your photograph finds me a wife, you are to have 100 per cent. of the dowry!’ Four years before his death, I took him some copies of the same photograph; on seeing it, he said with a smile—



GAMBETTA in 1862



“ ‘ Ah ! yes, I remember it : Faust with the daisy in his buttonhole. We have all grown older since those days, my boy ! ’ ”

Henri Deloncle wrote :—

“ Carjat’s charming photograph of Gambetta taken in 1862 completes these explanations. Gambetta’s thoughtful face taken in profile bears a strangely timid expression ; a faint smile hovers over his features. . . . A daisy adorns his buttonhole ; the short, lustrous beard, the curly hair, the thick Roman ear, the slender neck, and the square thumb of the hand protruding from the pocket, all indicate energy and the knowledge that he is capable of doing great things. . . . ”

PARIS, *August 10, 1862.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have been meaning to write to you for many weeks ; but really it is with the greatest difficulty that I can find a spare minute ; I am in despair ; I am up to my neck in work, I don’t know which way to turn ; and then, to crown it all, I am not very well ! I am tired ; I ought to rest, but I cannot do so now ; I must go on as I began if I want to make a name for myself. You must have seen in the newspapers that I have been appointed secretary to the advocates’ conference, which, it appears, is a great honour for me. Notwithstanding the value attached to the post, I make light of it ; it is not really of such importance ; the great thing is to get to know as many lawyers and men of business as possible. The holidays are beginning : all the advocates of any name are flying off into the country, and nobody knows how to find advocates to appear in certain lawsuits which have to be tried during vacation. As I am on the spot, I have been chosen to fill up the

gap; I am gaining ground, and you know that *if you give an ambitious person an inch, he will soon take an ell*. I think my ambition very praiseworthy: for my part, I intend to take four or five ells. So, by sacrificing two months, I shall be able to get together quite as many clients as if I had devoted three years to that task. Nevertheless, it is not altogether impossible that at the end of two months' solid work I may be able to come and rest for two more months with you at Cahors; that would mean the end of October, the whole of November, and the beginning of December, when there is very little going on at the *Palais*.

I told you that I was very busy. You must remember that I plead at least once every day and sometimes twice a day; then I have to rush hither and thither, to see this person, write to that one, and keep an eye on all that is going on in order to be up to date, to know everything, neglect nobody, know all the gossip of the day, read all the new books and newspapers, hear all that is being done and going to be done: that is what your dear son has to do every day of his life! You can imagine that he gets rather tired at the end of it all, and so you must be lenient towards him and excuse him if he sometimes leaves you a long time without giving you any news of himself.

To console you for my remissness, I will tell you that *père* Crémieux has taken a great fancy to me, and that if he became president of the order of advocates, I should be *saved*! Let us hope! It is one o'clock and they are now voting. I am just off to see whose name has come out of the ballot box; if it is Crémieux's, you may expect a long letter from me to-morrow or the day after to-morrow.

As for my sister, she grows fatter every day; she eats as much as we three put together; she laughs, chatters, sings, beams on us; she is in rude health, and Paris suits her better than all the bathing-places in France and perhaps in Italy too. My aunt does not grow any fatter, but she gets along very well; she has an iron constitution and lets neither cold nor heat affect her. I am the only person who is tired, but I hope in two months' time to come and rest at Cahors among you and bask in my native sunshine. Meanwhile, I embrace you all.

L. GAMBETTA.

September 30, 1862.

. . . We are moving down to the ground floor of the same house. The landlord has consented to lower the rent and to do some necessary repairs. I do not think we could do better elsewhere; we shall pay 800 francs rent, and he is going to make some important improvements for us; so I have agreed, and we move in on October 15th.

So you see, you will have to come and see us sooner than you expected. We are anxiously awaiting your arrival; you can take your time as it is the same house, and then I will show you, by my method of working and conducting my business, that you can rely upon me. . . .

PARIS, *October 14, 1862.*

MY GOOD MOTHER,—My father arrived yesterday morning. I was very surprised and highly delighted to see my uncle; I could hardly believe my eyes; the two brothers, here, in Paris, in the rue Vavin, seated at the same table, in my house! When we remember recent events, it really seems like a dream; but what does that

matter? 'tis a beautiful dream. My father seemed delighted with our new lodging; as for me, I am enchanted with it; if I can manage to buy some handsome-looking furniture for my drawing-room, I think that I may expect to get on in Paris, where one can do anything if one has plenty of friends; one needs at least one room in which to receive one's visitors, impress the humble guest and show the *grande*s that one is getting on in the world. One half of human life resembles a comedy, the other half sometimes resembles a tragedy; the two skilfully blended make for success or failure. Just at present I feel brave and cool-headed; I am happy. The holidays will soon come to an end—that is to say, that business will begin to look up again. What will the opening year bring? What does the unknown future hold for us? I love to conjecture what may happen; I shall soon know more about it, for it is now quite settled that Maître Crémieux is going to take me on as his secretary when he returns: that means that the wind and tide will be in my favour.

I had arranged, just as my father made up his mind to come to Paris, that I would go and spend a week in le Berry with Laurier, where I should have met some clever and influential men, including Maître Crémieux perhaps. But I have had to postpone my journey on account of his arrival: I shall be obliged to start Friday or Saturday at the latest. I will write to you from there and tell you all that happens. . . .

Crémieux, in a letter dated from La Forêt, October 16, 1862, himself announced to Gambetta the fact that he was going to take him on as his secretary:

MY DEAR GAMBETTA,—I hasten to accept your offers

of assistance, and I shall have much pleasure in watching the development of your talent, which will be a source of great glory to us in the future if you show that you are not only gifted but that you know how to work hard.

Only, my dear *confrère*, you are rather late in the day. For the last ten years I have been trying to cut down my work; at my age I cannot face these daily encounters; I choose such briefs as it is in my power to choose; I only undertake important cases, it is true, but they are few in number. So you must learn to look out for yourself, although you may come and take refuge under my wing from time to time.

I am writing to Laurier, who is sure to arrive in Paris before me. Put your heads together; I know that he will receive you with open arms. I shall not be back before the evening of the 2nd. Your very devoted,

AD. CRÉMIEUX.

PARIS, November 7, 1862.

MY KIND MOTHER,—I have owed you a letter for a long time; but I was waiting to write until I could give you some really good news. It is all settled: that kind Laurier has left no stone unturned in his endeavours to push me. I was petted at his country house and introduced to a number of celebrities who, I am sure, will not refuse to lend me a helping hand; several influential persons and men of business singled me out as worthy of notice. He introduced me to M. Villemain of the *Académie Française*, who has invited me to come to his house as often as I like during the coming winter and in whose *salon* I shall meet all the most celebrated and distinguished persons in Paris. I am now in the employ of M. Crémieux, who treats me as if I were a

twenty-year old *protégé*; I have been installed in M. Crémieux's study just as if I were a son of the house. I am more than delighted. On my return from the country I found a letter from that excellent M. Crémieux; I send it to you, so that you may share in the pleasure which it afforded me.

I have already taken up my position; and the illustrious chief who has burdened himself with me has kindly expressed himself highly delighted with the results of several lawsuits which I have lately conducted. I hope before the end of next month to appear in a case which will make a great deal of noise in the world; but I can tell you nothing more about it at present; when I am quite sure that I shall get it, I will write and let you know immediately.

CHOLET, *December 1, 1862.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—You must be astonished to get no letter from me; but for the last few weeks I have been overwhelmed with work; I was obliged to go to Angers, where I had to appear in a very important case which I settled on the spot after four days' sojourn in that town; but my stay was extremely pleasant, for Maitre Crémieux had given me letters of introduction to all the best families in the place: I was therefore welcomed like an old friend. Delighted with my reception, my hosts, and my success, I congratulated myself once again on the fact that I was in the employ of a man whom one only has to know to find everything made easy for one.

I am now at Cholet, where I appear to-morrow in a nice little commercial lawsuit. All this enables me to earn a little much-needed money. Anyhow I am be-

ginning to get some fees; those which I have already received are quite handsome, and I have every reason to hope that, if Fortune continues to smile upon me, I shall soon cease to be a burden to my family. Who knows if I may not even be of use to you? I desire nothing more than to see the day when I shall be able to reward the sacrifices which you have made for me. . . .

January 1, 1863.

MY DEAR MAMA,—What can I say to you, my sweet mother, to tell you all I feel? What tongue could express my gratitude and my love? Are you not the bravest of mothers and the most devoted of wives? Ought I not to be the most loving, the most respectful, and the proudest of sons to have such a mother? Ah! I can find no words to express all I feel; I ought to enclose my soul and my heart in this letter and send them to you: they alone can make themselves understood and explain all their feelings to you.

As to my prayers, wishes, and longings—what can we wish for each other which we have not already wished for each one of us? Can I wish you any happiness which is not my own? Alas! no; we share everything; or rather, what belongs to me belongs to you. We are one and the same person seen in two different lights. As I am your son, I ought to prolong your life with my kisses and my affection. Some day I will give you the glorious, joyous repose which you so richly deserve.

We can only exclaim with one accord: Courage! The goal is nigh; let us wait a little longer, my sweet, my dear mama; we shall conquer Fate at last, and then I will lay all at your feet and cry with tears of joy and pride: “Mother! behold the work of your hands!”

You see, all my wishes are yours; the son loses himself in his mother and regrets but one thing (but that thing is sad and painful), that he cannot kiss her over and over again on both cheeks. Ah! how dreadful it is to be parted!

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *February 23, 1863.*

. . . I hope that you will come again on your return from Italy, whither you are going in order to save the paternal homestead from the hands of peasants and strangers; on your return I shall expect you here, and I promise this time to take every care of you and to sacrifice everything rather than let you feel lonely for one single instant.

Only I shall not have the pleasure of welcoming you to this house which you know, and to which I had grown so accustomed, that I feel strangely sorry to leave it. But the landlord has sold it to a third party, and so we shall have to turn out before next July. I am very vexed; yet another removal! And then I was already well known in the neighbourhood; I had settled down; and now we must go elsewhere. Ah! well, it is only one of the little worries to which one is liable when one lives in Paris; but I shall be on my guard with my next landlord, and I shall take my new apartment on a three, six, or nine years' lease. That is the only way to get peace; if you do not do that you are at the mercy of your landlord who, for an extra 10 francs' rent, will turn you out.

From this to the month of July I shall have time to look for a nice apartment to take the place of this, which I thought would shelter me until the dawn of better days: now it will only be one more halting-place to count on life's highway.

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What news can I give you? My hand is in; I am getting on splendidly; I am working; business is coming in slowly but surely. People are beginning to take notice of me, and I hope, in a few years' time, to come and embrace the two dear creatures to whom I owe everything—my father and my mother—and to cry, "Behold, what I am and what I am worth! I am the work of your hands, and as such I bring it back to you."

That is what I hope, what sustains me every hour of the day, and always enables me to bear the little misunderstandings which cannot last long between two hearts like that of the father and the heart of the son who embraces him.

L. GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *March 9, 1863.*

. . . Our little disagreement was only caused by a misunderstanding. You cannot doubt my affection for you and my good faith, and you really cannot believe those absurd rumours which have been lately spread concerning my opinions and my feelings. For the second time in my life as a young man, people have tried by false reports to sow discord between us; we must scorn these inventions of evil-minded busybodies. As to my belief in God and in religion, I am too sensible both in political and religious matters to deny their existence. And then, as you yourself say very appropriately, religion is one of the most valuable resources of eloquence. So you can reassure yourself on that score. I am still faithful to my old opinions. If you were near me, I could soon dispel your fears. I beg you to pay less attention in future to certain reports calculated to do me harm. It is difficult for acquaintances to make themselves understood

when separated, but such is not the case with father and son ; so I am quite sure that when you read this letter you will have forgotten that you were angry with me and then you, like me, will regret that you cannot seal your pardon with a kiss. But I hope you will seize the first opportunity to come and give it to me in Paris ; only you will not find us in the rue Vavin but in my new abode in the rue Bonaparte, No. 45, where I shall welcome you. My landlord has sold this house and given me notice to quit ; I have found a very handsome and very comfortable apartment in a fine street very close to M. Crémieux and Laurier, close to the *Palais*—in fact, in the very centre of all my business. I have taken it for six years at a yearly rent of 1,000 francs ; I shall be near my clients, and so I hope to be able to make up the difference between my former and present rental. I move into my new home on April 8, 1863. I will write to you between this and then for an anniversary which I will never allow to pass unnoticed as long as I live.

PARIS, April 1, 1863.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I avail myself of the Easter holidays in order to write you a longer and more complete letter than the one which I sent you for your birthday, and to which, I must say, I expected to receive a reply ; but you are probably busy, and I know so well what Holy Week means to you, that I can quite understand the cause of this delay. As for me, I am very busy notwithstanding the holidays ; the elections for the *Corps législatif*, which will soon take place in Paris, give me a great deal of work. You will have seen my name mentioned in the newspapers in connection with the committee which has to draw up the list of future

candidates and to which I belong. I am beginning to make a place for myself in the world; my circle of political acquaintances grows wider every day; I now know all the influential supporters of Democracy. Everything is going on splendidly: I only have to be prudent, and, in that respect, I can assure you I have profited by your good advice. There is nothing to be done in politics without caution and foresight.

Business is going on fairly well, although it is still rather slack; but I have no cause to complain. I have earned some money which has enabled me to buy some much-needed furniture and books. I have had many incidental expenses, many sums to pay out, which would have made me rather short had it not been for two or three strokes of good luck as, for instance, the case of Calvit de Lalbenque who behaved very handsomely to me and sent me 500 francs two months ago. He won his case in the Courts of Common Law; the man who stole from his son-in-law was sentenced to thirteen months' imprisonment, and I shall finish this case in the Civil Court as soon as the delay for appeal has expired. I am in *père Crémieux's* good graces; my friend Laurier has got me a nice case which, in two months from now, will make a great stir in the world and in which I hope to play an important part.

Meanwhile, we are worried at having to change house, a tiring and expensive business, but we shall not have to move again for six years. Péphau, who sends you his kind regards, will lend us a helping hand.

PARIS, *April 12, 1863.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I was very grateful to you for your kind and prompt reply, and also for the handsome

and more than sufficient store of provisions which you sent us. I am also very glad to hear that you are going to Italy with my sister; so I shall soon have the pleasure of receiving you in my new establishment in the rue Bonaparte. Augustin Reilhé, whom I was delighted to see once more in Paris, gave me news of you to-day. He has just left us after a long chat about Cahors and different events which have lately taken place there. . . .

PARIS, *June 3, 1863.*

MY DEAR MAMA,—I much regret that I was not free sooner; but the general elections, which surpassed even my expectations, have kept me busy and taken up all my time; I was unable to sleep; I had not a minute to myself: all my time was given to others. As peace has fallen on the scene, I hasten to write to you. Reilhé left for Cahors yesterday: he is bringing you the dress which I promised you; wear it to please me; it is an "advocate's gown," for it was bought with my fees.

I appear to-morrow, the 4th inst., at four o'clock, in the Mexican affair; my heart beats in anticipation; there will be a splendid audience. I plead in company with several well-known advocates, and many so-called friends are already on the look-out to bite me if I stumble; but I no longer suffer from nervousness: long live danger! I will write you the result.

PARIS, *June 22, 1863.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—First I must tell you that I am delighted; the success of the elections overwhelmed me with joy. I took a very active part; I bestirred myself and put myself in communication with all the scientific, energetic, and generous leaders of this liberal and democratic movement; I have acquired a genuine

influence over them. As I write to you, I am convinced that the past three months of electoral contest have done more for my future than three years of calm, peaceful study. I am being watched, observed, discussed; but I am not only criticised—I am praised and encouraged; and so I am convinced that Fate smiles upon me and that she intends to treat me as her spoiled child.

The Mexican affair came very opportunely to crown my success and to push me into the front rank. My chief, Maitre Crémieux, treats me as if I were his adopted son; and if within three years' time he is elected a deputy (which is quite possible) my career will be settled once and for all. I must devote myself to law and politics, and then I may hope to triumph over all obstacles and finally attain to great honours. I am going within a month's time to appear in an important lawsuit between some literary men; it will be a great event in my career and one upon which my future may depend. All Paris is interested in this case; there will be a splendid audience and every literary man in town will be present. The newspapers are sure to be full of it.

That means that, notwithstanding the emotion which such a prospect causes me, I long to measure swords with censure and envy. If I emerge triumphant from this new contest, everything will go smoothly in the future. I am studying and preparing myself for the fray. Rely upon me; trust and hope, and you will soon see what your son can do in order to prove himself worthy of you and your ambition. . . .

VASSY, *July 28, 1863.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am writing to you from far Lorraine, whither I came in order to appear in an

electioneering case for M. Donnel-Bernardin, the candidate for the opposition party against Baron Lesperut, the Government candidate; I pleaded in the very town which had elected my client. The whole town was present; my speech was forcible, and I was very content with my efforts: you know that is not often the case with me. I charmed the population and squashed the Government candidate; they gave me quite an ovation on leaving the court. I write to you before going to a banquet which is being given in my honour by the leaders of the opposition party in this town, in order to let you share in my pleasure.

I am expecting a telegram from Brussels summoning me to appear in an important lawsuit between some artists in the Belgian capital. I shall be busy until the first week in September; but my aunt is suffering from a lingering illness, and her health makes me very anxious, so I shall send her to you early in August.

I see the future dawning; it promises to be very brilliant.

STRASBURG, *August 28, 1863.*

I left Paris yesterday at half-past eight o'clock, and I arrived at Strasburg at a quarter past seven this morning; I pleaded at nine o'clock, and I leave this evening at five o'clock. I send you these few words by post.

The public seemed to like my speech which, however, was poor owing to the fatigue caused by a night spent in the train and my disordered stomach.

I shall probably go and plead at Dijon, in the department of the Côte d'Or, before coming to Cahors, after which I shall fly to embrace you. I long to be with you again.

GAMBETTA THE ADVOCATE 209

LE BLANC (INDRE), *September 9, 1863.*

I have come here in order to appear in a splendid civil lawsuit which Laurier's father-in-law got for me. I was immediately received by the family as if I were a son of the house, and I was petted and made much of; they will scarcely allow me to return to Paris. Yesterday I pleaded before all the most distinguished men of the place. I had a tremendous success, and in the evening M. Naquet, the lawyer to whom I owed the brief, gave a banquet of which I was the hero. I tried to win the hearts of all these good folk and I succeeded. To-day the chief thing is to regain my liberty; they want me to remain here until Monday. I resist, but feebly; for the scenery is beautiful and my hosts kind and amusing; if I wait, I may manage to get something for the future. . . .

LÉPINEAU, *October 5, 1863.*

I am here in my friend Laurier's house, where I am the most petted and most honoured of all the guests, distinguished and otherwise, who flock to this delightful country-place. I feel quite at home; every one showers attentions upon me. Next to my own dear family and you, my good, my sweet mother, I cannot imagine a more affectionate, a more thoroughly delightful family circle. I feel as if I had been born here, and I only wish you could make the acquaintance of all these good people, that you might increase your circle of friends and thereby find more enjoyment in life. I shall hope some day to be able to introduce you to all these dear creatures, for I am certain that you will find that they possess the warm-heartedness so necessary to make life worth living and that affectionate disposition which affords man the only real happiness to be found in this world.

Maitre Crémieux is here, jolly, boyish, bubbling over with good nature and full of endless anecdotes of old times which he can relate to perfection, of gossip of the present day which he criticises with keen shrewdness, and predictions for the future which he insists upon painting in rosy tints fraught with marvellous deeds, just as if he were still only twenty years old. . . .

November 8, 1863.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Here I am back again and settled in Paris for a winter which promises to be very auspicious as to business and acquaintances. The day before yesterday I appeared in a splendid Press lawsuit; of the three advocates I was the only one who was able to get his client acquitted. The day was profitable; the court was filled with all the shrewd wits in Paris, from the editors of the *Figaro* and the *Nain Jaune* to the staid secretaries of the two Academies. My speech, which lasted for a good hour, was witty and animated; I delighted my judges (forgive me if this seems conceited); they acquitted my client. This little success made quite a stir and went the round of Paris; you know that I am not indulgent for myself and you are well aware that I never try to deceive myself. I was very pleased with my efforts.

Maitre Crémieux has not returned yet; I do not complain much of his absence, because I avail myself of it in order to plead a few more important cases.

Everything points to the fact that the year will be profitable and that I shall have the pleasure of coming to Celle in the month of June with full hands and a proud heart; for I have not forgotten our plan to go to Celle in order to choose a country house; I am looking

forward with real pleasure to revisit that country and to help you choose a shelter for your old age, where I can come and see you whenever the holidays give me a chance to get away from Paris. . . .

I have already sent you two copies of the *Moniteur* containing an account of the re-opening of the Chambers; I think you may like to see and to read the interesting debates which will soon take place.

I have already been to the *Assemblée*: * a great change

* Ludovic Halévy relates: ". . . I was just speaking of the time when Gambetta was a nobody: I was wrong. Gambetta was always somebody. It was in 1862 or 1863, Gambetta was not yet twenty-five years of age, but the *Cinq* already treated him with extreme deference. The *Cinq* were the representatives at the *Corps législatif* of the five electoral divisions. Gambetta, by common consent of all the students' political clubs, had been chosen to represent them. He belonged to the Chamber long before he became a deputy. He assisted at all the *séances*; when Picard or Jules Favre were in the rostrum, they sometimes darted a stealthy glance to the place where Gambetta usually sat, whereupon the latter would make signals of encouragement and approbation. One day, it was in 1863, Picard was going to speak. The Chamber was full, more than full, and Picard was in despair; he had no ticket for Gambetta, who was pacing to and fro in the *salle des Pas-Perdus*. There was no room for Gambetta! . . . What would the students say? A deputy for the majority, M. de Montjoyeux, came to Picard's aid. He went off to see M. de Morny and asked him to find a place for the young friend of the *Cinq*.

"'There is no room except in my gallery,' replied M. de Morny. 'But I will find a place for Gambetta. I have heard a great deal about him; I shall not be sorry to see him!'

"So Gambetta was shown into the gallery of M. de Morny, who, eye-glass in hand, examined the little advocate from the Quartier Latin. After which, he rang the presidential bell and opened the meeting."

Dr. Cayla tells us the following reminiscence of the same period:

"We, the *habitues* of the Café Procope, had given him the nickname of Gambotchi. His calm audacity astonished his friends; he never missed an opportunity to become familiar with the routine

has come over the Chamber; it is evident that this cringing majority is beginning to raise its head and to feel its feet; it has even gone the length of making overtures and flattering the opposition party: one would think that we were on the eve of a revolution. The speech from the throne was badly received and all sorts of interpretations were put upon it; both cowards and fire-eaters say that it means war and that they can smell gunpowder; calm, cool-headed politicians assert that it means peace at all costs. You know what I told you a month ago; my opinion has not changed. I am a partisan for peace; I firmly believe that the Emperor does not wish for war, but he dares not express his opinion to such a warlike country as France. So much the worse! for he is only alarming the financial world all for nothing, and the end of it all will be an atrocious crisis in commercial circles, heralded by a rise in the price of stocks and a new loan on the part of the Government.

PARIS, *February 6, 1864.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—My mother wants to return, and although I should like to keep her with me longer, I must be resigned; for you have already made a great sacrifice in letting her come to me; I am very grateful to you for having left her in Paris for a whole month and for taking all the cares of the household on your

of legal and political affairs. He went so far as to force his way into M. Thiers' house in the rue Saint-Georges in order to learn from the old statesman the real signification of a budget. And Thiers, both surprised and delighted, explained to the young man, who was a perfect stranger to him, the complicated mechanism of that strange institution called a budget. This was the first interview between the two fathers of our Republic."

own shoulders. I hope that you will come in turn and pay me a visit before going to Celle, where, as we arranged, I wish to help you choose a pretty country house which will form the counterpart of the edifice which I daily build in imagination in Paris; and we will pass the best days of our lives in going from one to another.

I feel that I am lucky: by that, I mean that Fate seems inclined to smile on me. It is said that Mazarin, before engaging a clerk or a secretary, instead of asking what the candidate knew, always inquired whether he was lucky or not.

The artful Cardinal knew that the rarest and most brilliant qualities are as smoke without the help of good luck. I am inclined to agree with Mazarin on that point, and I firmly believe in Fate. Perhaps it is because I have only cause to praise her ever since my career commenced. An old saying has it: We laud the gods who are propitious to us. My fondest wishes have been fulfilled. . . .

PARIS, *February 23, 1864.*

I send you the photographs of mama, and your seal, J. G. I hope that they will please you. You do not say what you think of Carjat's photograph; I particularly wanted to know what you thought of it. When you come to Paris, I will make you have yours taken; but I want it to be a masterpiece. . . .

There is nothing new, or rather everything is just as it was in Paris; some are getting ready for a great war next spring; others, convinced that it would be madness to make any expedition in Europe, are trying to reassure their friends. The spring months will be well occupied with pacifying all these good folk, without counting the elections in Paris, which mean a compli-

cated exhibition of egotism among young and old. But you must read the *Phare de la Loire* assiduously; as it has some capital correspondents in Paris, it is well informed.

August, 1864.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I received your letter, which gave me much pleasure; it was full of the passionate and dignified sentiments peculiar to your nature. You may believe that I take after you in this respect, and that never will I allow any scoundrels or impertinent fellows to be wanting in respect or in consideration towards me. For the last two years Mirès has been abominably ungrateful to M. Crémieux and to Laurier, whom he has frequently insulted; a fortnight ago I witnessed such a disgraceful scene that I was quite indignant, and I made use of my strong arm in order to pay him out for all his past and present insolence. I gave him a good licking, which I know how to do when necessary.

The year is ending well; I plead frequently and I am quite a favourite with the courts; I have every reason to hope that I shall be my own master next year. I shall see you before then, and your advice will give me new courage.

I am going to send my aunt to you before the end of the month; I shall join her in September. I shall stay a little longer with you than I did last year; however, you must understand that I am too busy, and that I am obliged to keep too many irons in the fire, to be able to stay away from Paris as long as I should like to do. I hope that Laurier will be able to come and see me while I am at Cahors, and that you will give my best friend the welcome he deserves.

I will send you to-morrow, or the day after to-morrow,

a newspaper containing a pen-portrait which I have just made of our new president of the order of advocates, E. Desmaret; next week I am to draw Favre's portrait, and I much hope that all this seed will not fall on stony ground. One regret alone is mingled with my joy, and that is M. Crémieux's failure, for he was not elected President. You see, although we may grow old in the service of our clients, our enemies and jealous friends dog our steps up to the very threshold of the Pantheon. However, we must not mind; we must try to comfort ourselves and *go straight on*; that is my war-cry! I embrace you.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

LÉPINEAU, October 15, 1864.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Another fortnight (how I long to see it pass!) and I shall fly to Paris and gladly resume my old life and my occupations. My all-too-short visit to Cahors has made me feel another man; I feel far more capable of pushing the wheel of our common fortune than I did last year; for in future our fortunes are united; we must both reach the desired haven: honourable and sweet repose for you and my mother; a reputation, and perhaps glory, for me; for my aunt and my sister the happiest existence imaginable. . . .

I will write to you a day, or two days, before my departure. Until then, moderate my aunt and my sweet sister's impatience: it is useless for them to come to Paris before I return and before the end of the holidays. My *concierge* forwards me all my papers regularly; I tell her where to send them, and she executes any commissions which I may happen to send her with intelligence and punctuality. And what have you been doing? Have you seen Garibaldi? Has he written again to you?

Is he in Paris, and can I find his address if he is still there when I return?

I should be delighted to introduce myself to him. If you want a thing to be done well, always do it yourself; and I should feel quite inclined to go and see him with you at Easter, or in July or August on our way to Celle, as I had promised you to do. Kindly let me know something about the matter.

As I am giving myself a rest from politics here, I scarcely know what is going on! But I see that my prediction that the stocks would fall is being realised every day. We must wait, and then some day we may be able to make a nice little stroke of business for ourselves. On my return to Paris I will go and have a look round, and then I shall be able to tell you something more definite. . . .

PARIS, March 30, 1865.

Yesterday's *séance* was terrible: there was an extremely violent altercation between M.M. Rouher and Picard concerning the events of December 2nd. I am still in ignorance this morning as to what the *Moniteur* will say about this grave debate; but I much fear that there will be another tussle to-day if the report is inexact or incomplete. You have probably read Ollivier's speech: he has quite done for himself now; for the opposition party, after having been coolly betrayed by him, has thrown him over, and the Government only consents to accept him as a turncoat. Lastly they talk of an interview with the Emperor, from which he may emerge a full blown Minister. I don't believe it: if the Empire takes him, it will show that it is in a bad way. M. Thiers' speech consoled us for that of Ollivier. That witty old man has never been more crafty or more clever;

it was a three hours' triumph of eloquence, and Paris can talk of nothing but his speech.

We are sailing quickly towards the future ; the present *régime* has now been in existence for thirteen years, and it is still discussing its constitution and its origin as if it only dated from yesterday. That is a sign of approaching death. Watch and wait : those words are big with significance.

Having done with politics, let us now talk about the weather. Since the death of Mathieu de la Drôme it has much improved ; we have been able to give up coal and coke ; we have seen the sun again and we have been able to take walks with my sister, with whom I am as delighted as ever. Everybody says the same thing ; wherever she goes, people are charmed with her. My aunt is very well ; she is in the best of health and spirits. From time to time we catch glimpses of the moon, but I know her little ways and I don't worry myself about her.

April 13, 1865.

I am on the right track ; but I still need you and your advice, for I notice every day how right you were in your fatherly forethought ; now that my life is getting somewhat calmer, I see the reason for your conduct and the advice which you have always lavished upon me. I am winning the confidence as well as the affection of Maître Crémieux ; his wife has taken a great fancy to me, and so I cannot leave them now. I am really attached to them ; every day I feel more grateful to Fate for having allowed me to meet them. Never in my life have I met with any one whose conversation is more instructive than that of Maître Crémieux, and I earnestly hope that this great, amiable, and generous chief will

keep me in his service for many years. I am making a most amusing and instructive study of history; for a person who has seen as much as he has is like a talking history-book. . . .

PARIS, *April 16, 1865.*

. . . I should have come myself, as I promised, to see you during the Easter holidays, but I thought it better to wait until I went to Moissac to appear in the lawsuit against the President of the Courts of Justice. By doing this I shall combine business with pleasure. If the weather has become as fine in the South as it is in Paris, the country must be looking lovely, and so I shall be able to take some nice walks with you; for I, like yourself, have recommenced my daily walks.

We will now review political affairs: as far as I am concerned, I can give you good and reassuring news. I believe that we are on the high-road to a great change. Political affairs do not preclude other affairs, and I should be quite content if my clients did not treat me so shamelessly; only this very month I have been gulled by a gang of blackguards; but it is the pride of our profession to defend the weak without any expectation of reward. I console myself by thinking of the future. But times are hard, and this month has been unusually rich in worries and anxieties.

PARIS, *Friday, April 21, 1865.*

MY GOOD FATHER,—I hasten to reply to your charming and delightful letter. You saw that I was hard up and, quick! you hastened to anticipate my desires. Your present will procure some articles of clothing for myself, my sister, and my aunt; but I have quite made up my mind about one thing, and that is that I will plead for no one unless they pay me in advance. I shall make excep-

tions when I consider it advisable to do so; but when once I have made this rule, I shall be better protected and people will find it more difficult to take me in. I have to appear in a case at Epernay on Thursday next; I asked my clients to pay my fees in advance or else I would not go. So far I have received no answer; we shall see to-morrow. The weather is very fine; I should like to travel a little, pleading here and there, and so combine business with pleasure. I have written this morning to Moissac asking that my case may be fixed for the third week in May; this would enable me to come and see you at Cahors during the agricultural *fêtes*. However, we shall have no spring this year; the summer has come already; it is terribly hot; people will leave Paris early this year, without counting our enemy (*our master*, as J. de la Fontaine would say), who is going to spend two months in Algeria, which will draw a certain number of lazy and noisy idlers from the capital! Politics will soon take a rest: badly managed and long-winded debates have wearied the nation's attention and the session will be a bad one for the Liberals. Luckily, affairs abroad are big with terrible incidents. Germany, Italy, Spain, the United States and Mexico all seem in trouble. All these clouds on the horizon mean a great storm before the end of the year. And then they still say that the man *is ill*: an accident may happen, death strikes swiftly; this man's life is the *thread* upon which everything hangs: if the thread snaps asunder, what will become of us? That is an important question which is usually solved *three* days after the catastrophe. As for me, I am *indefatigable*, as you will be able to see for yourself and prove with your own *legs* at our first interview.

PARIS, June 23, 1865.

Everything is going on well; the strikes and the coalitions are passing off splendidly. The nation is getting accustomed to liberty; the *suffrage universel* will surprise us with its wisdom before five years have elapsed; and who knows whether we shall not be free before then? . . .

To Clément Laurier, Paris.

BORDEAUX, August 5, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Here are two words. I am rather tired. I have seen Bordeaux and I don't care much for it. People think that anything may happen—anything except a serious stand against Waleski. Only we ought to ascertain about the division of Dax. I am starting to-night laden with documents; I am feeling about to see if the expected birth is likely to take place under favourable conditions; we must resort to severe measures if necessary! *

To Clément Laurier, 3, quai Voltaire, Paris.

BAYONNE, August 7, 1865.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am worn out and discontented. This part of the world is not up to much: like all poor districts, the inhabitants only ask to be allowed to beg

* Gambetta was always a splendid hand at organising elections. Camille Pelletan said of him:—

“The man was mixed up in everything; he wanted to know everything; he was everywhere and on intimate terms with every one; one would have thought that he cared nothing for his life. We were surprised to find in the midst of this feverish existence, with his splendid and eloquent speeches, the fruit of long hours of study, that he possessed a rare talent for observation and a strangely shrewd and calculating genius for politics.”

and to receive alms. If they elect Waleski, they will find that they have only elected a task-master for themselves; they are sure to do so. And yet if the ground had been prepared some time ago, we might have struggled with better advantage to ourselves. We had several chances of success on our side, including a group of financiers and landlords who did not want Waleski; a Dax newspaper which we might have used as a tool; and lastly some retired politicians who might have been aroused and made to take an interest in a Liberal candidate. The Government was not behindhand; it enticed them to join it; and these old leaders will, I fear, constitute a fine feather in the Government's cap.

There is nothing, absolutely nothing to be done, except to let the authorities triumph in solitary grandeur. And yet, with a three months' campaign we could change everything, which would suffice to reassure me as to the future.

As to the present, apart from electoral affairs, I must tell you that I have been at death's door with an attack of dysentery. For twenty-four hours I was in the same condition as Argan of yore. . . . I used strong remedies and I am now on my feet again; but I am not up to much; I have fearful stomach-ache which lasts ten minutes at a time and makes my teeth chatter. I do not know if I shall be able to go to Cahors; I am afraid of falling ill there. I forget if I have ever told you that the air of my native town does not suit me.

As soon as I am free—and things are working up that way—I shall return to Paris, where I long to meet you again in order to recount my Odyssey to you; for you know that my pen is but little if any help to my poor memory.

Before then I will beg you to be so kind as to adjourn a small case: the Mellerio *v.* Jeanti lawsuit which was to come on before the fourth chamber next Friday. You know that the Raynal case is to be tried the same day before the first chamber, but do not forget that the case of Poucel *v.* Monnier comes on at the *tribunal de commerce* on Thursday. If you can attend, write a line to Marraud asking him to have the petition read in court. I hope that the famous compact will not prevent you presenting my respects to Mme. Laurier. I shake both your hands.

PS.—Write to me, if you will, at my address at Cahors. I have changed my mind.

CAHORS, August 14, 1865.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am writing these lines from Cahors in your very own room; I am sitting by mama's side; it is two o'clock in the morning, and I am replying to your last letter, which we have just read over together.

First let me explain to you the reason of my presence at Cahors: I have been for the last ten days in the South of France, in the department of Les Landes, seeing how matters stand and trying to find out if a candidate for the opposition would have a chance to succeed. There is nothing to be done; and I was going to return to Paris Saturday night when an idea came into my head that I would go to Cahors to kiss mama good-day and spend Sunday with her. I arrived Saturday night as unexpectedly as a bomb; you can imagine her amazement. I start to-night for Paris, after having seen her and gladdened my heart. I see that you are anxious to get back with my little sister, and I congratulate you; mama is pining to have you back at home. . . .

To Clément Laurier, Albemarle Hotel, London.

PARIS, August 22, 1865.

MY DEAR CLÉMENT,—This morning I saw your kind, charming, but, alas! sad letter; you were very kind to me before you left Paris; but I am getting quite hardened to such kindness. That comes of spoiling one's friends; the very best of friends is not incorruptible! But let us say no more about the matter: it is of small importance. I assure you that I fully appreciate all your kindness and that I return your affection and gratitude.

Come, now! why are you so depressed? Have you received any bad news from home? I don't think so, for things are looking up. Every year towards the end of August you suffer from an attack of depression. I think that this year you have more reason to be depressed than you had last year; but I cannot allow you to continue in this sad state; you are too accustomed to restrain yourself and to govern your own feelings, not to be able to get over this last attack. I am sure that you will have no more relapses.

That is why I recommend you to shorten your stay at the risk of displeasing your gaolers. Come back to Paris and then take a turn in Italy or Germany; but leave England: it is the land of spleen and you need cheerful surroundings. When the devil will you recover the high spirits of yore? I think you could do so if you wished.

But I have preached to you quite enough for to-day. I am now going to tell you all the news which I have been able to get together. After the success of Waleski (who had so many votes that it really looked as if the ballot-box had been tampered with), they whisper the news of

Marsaux's triumph at Château-Thierry as if it were something to bewail. However, we know nothing for certain as yet.

The chief piece of political news is the decentralisation which the Varia Committee at Nancy proposes to the public. To-day an article by the Jacobin Peyrat has appeared full of wrath against the partisans of decentralisation, whom he terms "the monarchical party." So we are *monarchists* without knowing it! I know better!

The insurrection in Bucharest seems to be very serious. Complications are feared on the Russian frontier; and Prince Couza, who left Homburg in such a hurry, has probably lost his Walachia at *roulette*.

The Emperor and the Empress are still at Arenenberg, where the *parvenu* is renewing his acquaintance with the old village gossips. The *Moniteur Officiel* could hardly contain itself with delight this morning while relating the enthusiastic reception accorded to the Emperor by his boon companions. *E viva!*

I believe that the controversy anent *Les Deux Sœurs* is drawing to a close. Girardin alone obstinately continues to fill his columns with compositions in prose and poetry from his male and female admirers. This morning Scholl horsewhipped him in print. I send you the article in question. In conclusion, I must tell you, as you are a theatre-goer, that the *Opéra Comique* is going to stage *Les Percherons* very magnificently. These digressions will not prevent you from attending to your business as it deserves, or rather, as you deserve. . . .

I dined last night with Marzal, who sends you his love. I made him quake, for I persuaded him to drink out of the cup which I won at the *fête* of Bellevue, where we were last Sunday with that nice Latakié while you were

disporting yourself at Bougival. You may tell the honourable esquire (*sic*) Piguard that, if he wants to imitate our example, he need only buy Gambrinus' tun for himself. I embrace you. *Totus, totissimus.*

To Clément Laurier, London.

PARIS, August 23, 1865.

. . . I am trying to make friends between Scholl and Delaage. I will let you hear how I succeed by next post.

There is good news as to the elections for the department of l'Aisne: Tillancourt has defeated Marsaux by 3,400 votes. We must never despair of anything. That, I think, is the very latest piece of news during the holidays; for they say that the presidents of the General Council are forbidden to mention politics; but there are sure to be some intemperate creatures who are unable to keep their tongues from wagging.

That is all for the present: let me remind you that Ollivier was checkmated by the committee of the *Exposition universelle*; he had offered himself as a candidate for the presidency of a section, but they would have none of him.

To Clément Laurier, London.

PARIS, August 24, 1865.

We have had a bad day. I appeared to-day in the case of Poucel *v.* Monnier. I even put in a rejoinder. I did what I could for my deserving client but I failed: the court ruled that although Poucel and Monnier had evidently come to an agreement concerning the transfer of the patents, no definite contract had been signed. I was surprised that judges well versed in commercial

law could set aside the proof that a contract had been concluded contained in a very convincing correspondence according to my opinion; I feel strongly inclined to lodge an appeal. I have such a heap of things to tell you that I really don't know where to begin. Mlle. Bianca of the *Vaudeville* has been to pay me a visit—you know, that giddy young thing who mangles the English language in *Les Deux Sœurs*. She was accompanied by B. P.'s venerable mother. This honest maiden once knew a youth of the name of L——, who offered to marry her—but did not do so. In order to reward the little girl's generosity, L—— gave her bank-notes to the amount of 100,000 francs. His relations want to get back these notes, but the young lady won't give them up. She came to see you in order to get you to help her. I recommended her to wait until the family offered to come to terms—monetary terms—and to send you the name of the lawyer who has been charged to wrest the notes from her keeping. Meanwhile she has left the notes and the prodigal son's letters in my care—you will find them on your return, and they will dispel your spleen. . . .

August 25, 1865.

I have done my best to-day in the *Petit Journal* case. We sat until five o'clock and all the other lawsuits have been postponed until after vacation.

For the last three days I have been arguing with Scholl, who has got another crow to pluck with Delaage. Scholl, while strolling arm-in-arm with Aubryet at the *bal Mabille* last Tuesday night, met Delaage and called him a thief, a cad, and a swindler! At this Delaage made off; but next day, at five o'clock in the afternoon, he appeared accompanied by two friends on the threshold

of the Café Tortoni, where Scholl always takes his glass of bitter beer. Delaage went up to him and said—

“When are you going to pay me what you owe me?”

You can imagine Scholl’s astonishment. He said—

“But it is you who owe me 150 shares; give them up!”

Then one of Delaage’s companions asked Scholl if the scene at the *bal Mabille* had really taken place; Scholl swore that it had really happened and repeated his accusation of theft against Delaage.

The two witnesses then presented their visiting-cards to Scholl, who that evening begged me to act for him.

As you may imagine, my first duty was to ascertain the truth, and to suggest that they should not fight until they had paid each other what they owed. But here, on account of the transaction itself, I met with insurmountable difficulties. Scholl produced notes to the amount of 45,000 francs, of which twelve thousand did not bear Delaage’s signature; it seems that these notes dated from a substitution effected by Silvestre and Pic, and that it had been arranged, at the time of the agreement, that Delaage’s notes, by Pic’s orders, were not to be included in those which Scholl had to refund. It was impossible to arrive at an understanding. I refused to act farther in the matter and there we stopped. Scholl went off to Bordeaux. He is going to wait until Delaage takes legal steps in the matter; but as Delaage has not got the shares, the original cause of complaint will never be settled. On your return you shall give me your opinion on this knotty point, which you are more likely to be able to settle than any one else.

There is no other news except that the Emperor has

returned from Switzerland with his wife. They arrive at Fontainebleau this evening. He nearly did for himself at Neufchâtel; you must have read that Princess Anna Murat was badly hurt on the head. The Empress's charming *lectrice* had her neck injured and her arm broken. What will the Sultana say?—and Ollivier, who was going to marry her? . . .

Shake that brute Piguard's hand for me; he must be strutting about, showing himself off to the *youngs-ladies* (*sic*) . . . But I am going to tell the Marchioness all about it!

My love to Thévenard and M. Mendel. I am going to spend Sunday at Langres with Spuller's brother. On my return I hope to find letters from you and to reply to them. I embrace you.

To Clément Laurier, London.

PARIS, September 1, 1865.

. . . I have just returned from my peregrinations through Champagne, notwithstanding the weather, which has been awful. . . . On my return, I was much saddened by your letters from London: I think that you are too despondent and that you do not struggle sufficiently against such feelings; but as I do not want to pain you I will say no more about this matter.

I must thank you for taking so much trouble to send me our letters patent and letters of credit for my lords the attorneys. I hope to squeeze enough out of them to pay off my rascally duns. I did not dare to go to Delhomme to ask him to pay me the 5 louis in question. I waited for your return before I fingered the yellowboys. As for Millaud, you will finish him off with a stroke of the pen.

Every one is leaving town and the *Palais* is literally empty. . . . I have received a letter and a telegram from G. Crémieux, who wants to know when you are coming back; I have told him. Nothing new has happened, except that Darimon is to be decorated on Sunday and that Emile Ollivier has bought the newspaper, the *Suffrage Universel*, of which Philis is to be the principal editor. Good luck to you, beautiful Philis! People talk of nothing but decentralisation; every one calls his neighbour names. We have Jacobins, Girondins, Royalists, and Feuillants. We are back in the good old days. The different parties are already quite strong enough to tear each other to pieces: it is a good sign.

PARIS, September 29, 1865.

MY DEAR FATHER,—As I told you, I want to plead as often as possible, and for the last three weeks I have got my wish; I plead every day, and often twice a day.

Yesterday I left the *Palais* at half-past eight o'clock at night; we pleaded by candle-light. But all the better! By dint of pleading over and over again, one grows more sure of oneself, one accustoms oneself to the jury and to danger, and one acquires that calmness and self-reliance which alone enable one to do justice to one's powers.

So that is why I want to appear at the bar as often as possible.

I have found my man in the person of the advocate-secretary of the *Conseil de l'Ordre*, who exercises the duties of president of the order of advocates. He sends me all the briefs he can get for me, that is two each day. M. de Jouy recommended me to him: that was quite enough; I went to see him to thank him in person and

I feel that he will be my friend in future. I send you the first letter which he wrote me, before he knew me, and when he only had my chief's introduction upon which to rely. So, you see, I only ask to be allowed to work; I am putting all my weapons in order; I endeavour every day to prepare myself for the hour of probation, and I shall wait patiently for it to strike.

But none of this preparatory work is paid for; we must go gently. We are brave, and my good aunt is here to help me and to encourage me with her admirable example. She is a real treasure, she is my providence, and only she and I can realise the depth of her sacrifice; but I hope that some day things will be better arranged.

To Clément Laurier, Lépineau, par Ciron (Indre).

PARIS, October 6, 1865.

At last I have received a long letter from you containing some good news: the invalid is going on well! You will soon be quite strong again, and then you will become yourself once more.

Although you have gone through so many troubles lately, I am sure that you will not allow yourselves to be discouraged; so I am convinced that the metamorphosis will be a lasting one. I can quite understand how your grandparents' grief touches you; but I cannot praise you sufficiently for your determination to be and to remain master. Everything will settle down again in that quarter, and things will go smoother than ever if every one keeps in his proper place.

The immediate result of this new state of affairs will be to enable you to become your old self again. Your letter reminded me of the jolly, warm-hearted, simple-

mined, active friend of old times. A little more of this *régime* and you will begin to laugh again !

The second result, one which you must treasure most carefully, is that you have recovered your old broad-mindedness and your love of work : in short, your mental faculties have been restored in such a manner as to enable you to continue to follow your profession and enlarge your sphere of action. I shall be quite reassured as to your future when once you have recovered your good spirits. I beg you to congratulate Mme. Laurier on the success of her efforts for us in the name of her devoted friends, who count upon the continuation of her kind services.

I was much touched to hear that Jeanne was growing stouter. Make her run, eat, and sleep a great deal. Treat her physically ; the mind works too much in that little body. Make a steel scabbard for the trusty sword that is to be. *Le Petit Corbeau* made me laugh until the tears came into my eyes ; you portrayed her in one broad stroke of the pen, and one word sufficed to show her to me. Kiss them both heartily for me.

And now for town-talk. The *Figaro* has been forbidden to reproduce a wonderful article by Rochefort on the death of Grammont. *À propos* of Caderousse, Rochefort has written a most clever, witty satire on the profession of *the last gentleman*. If you can't get it at Lépineau, write me a line and I will send it to you ; as you like wit and fun, you will enjoy it. I much fear, however, that he will have a bone to pick with the fops who want to step into Duke Fashion's (*sic*) shoes. Yesterday's evening papers announced simultaneously the marriages of Cléry and H. de Kock, the former with his *fiancée*, the latter with his mistress : *Quis felicior ?*

Neuter fortasse! People obstinately continue to assert that Mlle. B—— is going to marry Ollivier. I much fear that this is the only reward which the deputy for le Var will receive for all his trouble. Hitherto people have been more frightened than hurt by the cholera; one sees livid faces on the *boulevards*; but until now death has even spared the cowards, and by so doing has failed in its duty.

A play by Dumanoir and Clairville has been loudly hissed at the *Variétés*; the piece was withdrawn after the third act. Hissing is becoming quite a powerful weapon: when will the Empire be hissed off the world's stage? In 1869! But the day of reckoning will have to be desired by one and all, as was the case in 1832. Such an event would spell ruin to the Empire; however, on this occasion the nation would be prepared and France would be ready to receive her freedom.

We have just had news of Durand, but it is bad news; our poor dear friend is very weak. Too much energy in a feeble body has worn him out before his time, and I dread the bad smells from the Nile for him. *À propos* of the Nile, they say that Caderousse's will . . . is valid, for it is said to have been dated from, and to have been drawn up in, Cairo; consequently it was made before his last illness. I fancy that this report is only circulated in order to hide some slippery transaction.

Although nothing seems going on in the world of politics, the drama is preparing behind the scenes. Bismarck is plotting with Bonaparte to annex Piedmont to the Rhenish provinces and to make it a German state. The evacuation of the Papal States has already begun; the Pope will come to terms with Victor-Emmanuel. The compromise will last a few years, and that will be better

for the final downfall of papacy. One thing alone is certain nowadays, and that is, that papacy is bound to disappear sooner or later.

As to business, it is only so-so. I thank you for your kind thought for me; I am very anxious, with your assistance, to drag myself out of the old groove—but you must understand that these perpetual sacrifices on your part must cease. I advise you to avoid solitude, although you secretly enjoy it. I don't think it is good for you any more than for our excellent Henri, to whom I am writing that I may shake him up a bit. . . .

Death has visited our enemies and our friends with cruel impartiality. After Girardin, now Neftzer* has been wounded in his dearest affections: his son, aged seventeen, was carried off in two days by typhoid fever. We bury him this afternoon at four o'clock. It is very sad. . . .

I recommend you to read in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for October 1st a terrible article by Kératry on guerilla warfare in Mexico.

PARIS, October 16, 1865.

DEAR FATHER,—I was really delighted with your last letter. I only regret one thing, and that is that I cannot, I fear, come and stay with you; but times are getting bad. I have just had a stroke of good luck; the winter promises to be a good one for me. I have got a nice berth and I take care to play the cards which Fate has placed in my hand to the best of my ability; I must earn money first of all; and I am working like the devil. I shall not allow myself to leave Paris until

* M. Neftzer was the much esteemed founder of the *Temps* newspaper.

I have provided for the coming winter. Except for the fact that I cannot come and embrace you, life is bearable here, notwithstanding all the public brawling. The climate is excellent, the sanitary condition of the capital is usually very good; here and there some imprudent creature, usually a foreigner, pays his debt to the horrible waters of the Seine, which this year are particularly poisonous. So water is forbidden in our establishment; we drink our own delicious nectar from the Lot, and we snap our fingers at the cholera. And then winter is coming; this morning it nearly left its visiting-card on us. It is quite cold out of doors. We shall have to light fires before another week is up, prepare the lamp, and work. I have never felt more inclined for work. I have a secret presentiment that I am about to make a glorious campaign. Meanwhile, my dear father, I count upon you as usual to supply us with provisions—with ammunition, as soldiers say.

I need not repeat or enter into details with you; you know how to do things in such a way that my wishes are more than satisfied.

Just for the present there are only two political rumours in the air, but they are very ominous and both may possibly come true: the first is that the Pope and Victor-Emmanuel have come to terms, as I told you they would do during the holidays last year; and that, recognising the Pope's power in temporal matters, replacing France's protection by Piedmont's guarantee, the Savoyard, satisfied with his aggrandisement, intends to go no further and cares not whether Rome is given back to the Romans or Venice to the Venetians. The people still know how to manage their own affairs better than any one else; their royal masters always deceive

them under pretence of helping them. I advise you to look out for yourself in that respect when dealing with your Italian friends.

The second rumour is even more serious, for it means nothing less than war with the United States if our Government persists in wanting to send fresh troops to Mexico. I honestly believe that war with the American Republic would very soon mean death to the Empire, so I doubt whether any one will be brave enough either to advise or to undertake it.

I have been alone in Paris with our excellent Dr. Fieuzal; but our friends are coming back to Paris one by one. Péphau and Vignaux returned yesterday; they will all be back again by the beginning of November and we shall try to finish the year 1865 in fine style. . . .

PARIS, *November 21, 1865.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I do not think that your short letters and over-lengthy silence mean that you are angry with me; for I do not know why you should be so, unless you bear me a grudge because I could not come to Cahors during the holidays; but you cannot be angry with me for this reason, for you know that I remained in Paris because I wanted to give myself up to my profession, and because you yourself, in one of your letters, encouraged me in my determination to try and increase my circle of business acquaintances while Fortune still smiled upon me. You do not need my assurances in order to understand that I was just as grieved as yourself not to be able to see you and to spend a few happy weeks with you. But what can I do? The life which I am now leading is a terrible companion; I neither have time to sleep nor to breathe; I have to

go on and on like a horse under the spur. Happy are they who reach the winning-post! *À propos*, I must tell you that I have this week lost my good and excellent friend Emmanuel Durand, who has just died of consumption in Alexandria, Egypt. He was a witty, kind-hearted fellow, well used to Parisian life; but his body was as frail as his mind was strong; the sword soon wore out the scabbard and he fell by the roadside. His poor mother wrote me a piteous letter, to which I sent a reply expressing all my sympathy with her in her grief; that is about the only way one can console the afflicted. . . .

Here the atmosphere—I mean the political atmosphere—is decidedly cloudy: although it seems likely that the army will soon be reduced, I fancy we are working up for something serious in Belgium or on the banks of the Rhine; when King Leopold dies, the dumb man who lodges at the Tuileries will execute some wonderful manœuvres; but first of all, he will have to return from Rome, perhaps from Mexico even, where it looks as if the cards were going to get decidedly mixed, for they say that Maximilian may even have to return. That would mean the end, sooner or later. God grant that our troops return before the Americans make us decamp!

You must have seen in the newspapers that the old *traditore* Dupin was dead; they say that Jules Favre will probably take his place at the *Académie française*. I hope he will do so, for then we shall hear a witty satire on the deceased and we shall at last have the pleasure of listening to a genuine academical speech.

The cholera has quite disappeared; everybody in

Paris is now complaining of constipation. After all, the epidemic was very mild; the poor creatures in the hospitals were about the only people who suffered, and they died like flies.

And now the Italian Parliament has reassembled; the King made a speech in which, it seemed to me, he dealt a death-blow to the present Cabinet; but he will find it difficult to extricate himself from the hobble into which he was led by the convention of September 15th. The budget of that kingdom is enormous, overwhelming, and it cannot be reduced as long as the army has to stand upon its guard.

However, I think they might pull through if they lowered the taxes and separated the Church from the State; but *birbi** are very plentiful on the other side of the Alps, and the biggest slices of the public fortune and of the newly made kingdom are sure to go into the honourable deputies' pockets. The more I see, the more cause I have to fear, not for the monarchy and the King, but for Venice and the Italian people.

PARIS, March 9, 1866.

. . . As you have already seen in the *Moniteur*, the political horizon grows blacker every day; the Government is steadily losing ground; defection is seen on every side; every one realises that the fatal hour must eventually strike; the year 1869 will be a decisive year for the Empire, as the year 1852 was a decisive year for the Republic.

Meanwhile I am studying and working harder than ever in order to be ready to take an active part in future

* *Birbi*: idle beggars.

events. I keep myself well up in all questions which I examine most thoroughly; I devote all the time I can spare from the *Palais* to politics. It is not ambition which makes me do this; politics attract me not only for my own sake, but for the sake of the general public.

When we meet again, we shall be able to examine the interests of French democracy, which must win the day if we wish the people's cause to triumph in Europe; in speaking thus I think of Italy in particular; for the last ten days, Italy has set us a noble example of unselfishness by subscribing liberally to the national subscription which, I believe, is destined to relieve the financial strain; but nothing definite can be settled until France reconquers her liberty; that is why the cause of France interests the oppressed and down-trodden nations of the whole world. . . .

July 20, 1866.

. . . The cholera has come, and unfortunately it seems more virulent than last year; we, who are acclimatised, run but little risk, but I should be alarmed if you were to come here, for I know that every new-comer has to pay tribute to Paris, and I should be terrified if you were to fall ill here. So give up the idea and send your indentures either by post or by a friend to your man of business or to a third party, and postpone your visit. I should prefer to come and pay you a visit at Cahors, where the air is proverbially pure, and where you could receive us without any danger to ourselves or others.

The cholera is bad enough to prevent Dr. Fieuzal attending his cousin's marriage at Albas; he is obliged to face the danger, and so he stays here.

Le Temps,
Journal politique et littéraire.

10, Faubourg Montmartre.

PARIS, September 3, 1866.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am writing to you in great haste to tell you, before starting for Lyons, where I am going to appear in a lawsuit against the journal on whose paper I am now writing, that I am sending my dear, kind aunt before me. The dear soul greatly needs rest and her native air; the doctor insists on her starting as soon as possible for Cahors. I need but remember how you love her to be quite sure that she will soon recover.

I have a nice case on the stocks which may delay my return, but you know what I promised you: I shall keep my word, for I long to embrace you. So I shall come to spend a month at Cahors, no matter what happens. This visit will come off sooner or later, and I much fear that it will be later than sooner. However, we must learn to be patient; we must remember the charges and duties which I have to fulfil. This year I have worked hard and well; and yet the hour for taking a holiday has not struck yet. I have much to finish before coming to Cahors. You may ask my aunt about my gigantic task; if I have succeeded, it is thanks to good fortune, which continues to smile each day more sweetly upon me.

I am beginning to see my way more clearly; my dreams of liberty and a successful career are tinged with a roseate hue which gives me fresh courage and makes me greet each new morning with the glad war-cry of the Americans: "Go ahead!" (*sic*).

October, 1866.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I really don't know what you must think of me; I am indeed terribly remiss. But if you

only knew, if you could only see the dog's life I am now leading and my feverish existence, you would feel more inclined to pity than to blame me. I literally have not time to breathe; I have to take breath while I run along. I could curse my fate when I remember that I have left you all this time without an answer. At last I have found a minute's leisure, and I avail myself of it in order to give you news of myself.

My bodily and mental health is satisfactory. Business is good—very good I might say—although every one complains that times are bad and money comes in very slowly. I have many clients who would gladly pay me if they could, but they cannot do so, and so I am obliged to comfort them instead of dunning them for my fees.

And then the Exhibition has made everything dearer; no one knows where it will end. Political affairs are tearing along at a fine rate. The Chamber is going to re-open; the session promises to be bad, even threatening. A terrific storm is brewing somewhere in Europe. Both the Empire and the Emperor are unsettled. The different political parties are taking counsel of each other, and before many months are over we may expect an outburst. Whither are we going? . . .

So much the worse! I am ready to go, and I prefer the storms of liberty to the horrible slough of despondency and slavery in which we have been floundering for the last fifteen years. . . .

December 4, 1866.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I will not try to excuse my silence since my return to Paris; you know me too well, you now know too much about my life, the mad whirlpool in which I am now living and which is dragging me

along in its eddies, for me to need in future to beg you to forgive any gaps in my correspondence. For the last fortnight I have been unable to call my time my own. Politics are getting red-hot; things in general are hurrying up, and I fancy that something serious is about to happen.

You cannot imagine what a lot I have to do, what a number of people I have to see, what heaps of stories to hear, what piles of books, pamphlets, and newspapers to read before I can pick up the thread of Parisian life. And then having taken a hurried look round, I had to go to work, the work which provides my daily bread. I made rather a good beginning. I have already received a handsome sum; but as I had got very behindhand during the holidays I have had to pay out a good deal; and of all I received there only remains the satisfaction of having been able to give a trifle to my duns to keep them quiet. But the wind is in the right quarter, and I am sure that the yearly voyage will be favourable to our interests; for, mark you, I am speaking of *our* interests. We must always share our ambitions, plans, and successes, else they will be valueless.

This is no dream, but a calm, carefully combined plan which determination and hard work are bound to realise. I shall not be contented until the plan becomes a reality. I hope that this prospect will help you and my mother patiently to bear the three years which we mutually agreed to devote to its realisation.

PARIS, *May* 25, 1867.

MY DEAR FATHER,—This is the first time for two months that I have been allowed to write a few lines;

I did not want you to know of my condition until I could tell you something definite. I will try to be brief: Both my eyes were in a terrible state; my bad eye had begun to fester and was seriously affecting the sound one; after having talked the matter well over, thanks to my excellent friend Dr. Fieuzal, I went to consult an eminent oculist, Dr. Vecker, who extracted my right eye, and who is now going to provide me with an artificial eye which I have already tried and which is so natural-looking that no one would believe it was not my own. So I shall be safe from any trouble in future, and my left eye will lose none of its strength. But I am ordered a complete rest for a whole month; you can understand that while I am in this state, deprived of work just at the busiest period of the whole year, my resources are being rapidly exhausted. I have to meet current expenses and everything is extraordinarily dear owing to the Exhibition; besides this, my artificial eye, of which a model has to be made, will cost me about 900 francs, without counting a handsome present which I shall have to make my doctor who will not take any money from me. All this puts me in a very awkward position, and I really need some one to come to my aid. Besides the *régime*, which I am now following and which excludes pastry and vegetables and prescribes butchers' meat and wine only, is a source of extra expense to me. You will be able to realise my position, and you will see what you can do for me. The important thing was that everything should pass off well, and this was just what happened. The wound is healing splendidly; in eight or ten days I shall be able to wear my artificial eye several hours a day, and

then in a month's time I shall be completely cured and no one will be able to recognise me.

When my mother and my sister kiss me, I shall be quite changed even to their sharp eyes. -

During my illness, all my kind friends came to call upon me, and I was much comforted to be able to count several real friends among the most prominent men in Paris.

I kiss you all from the bottom of my heart.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Letter from Fieuzal to Joseph Gambetta.

PARIS, June 11, 1867.

DEAR MONSIEUR GAMBETTA,—I have been meaning to write to you for some time in order to give you some details of the operation which my excellent friend, your son, has had to undergo; but I did not wish to do so until I could give you more reassuring news concerning the state of his health.

Léon has for long suffered from the eye which he unfortunately lost more than fifteen years ago; but the pain which he then suffered was not so acute as it became six weeks ago; so bad was it then, that although I had for long been certain that we should eventually have to remove the lost eye in order to save the other, I was waiting until the operation (which, in itself, is rather dangerous) should become absolutely necessary; and that is precisely what happened six weeks ago. The pain in the blind eye spread to the healthy eye and prevented Léon reading, even for a very short time, except with great danger to himself. As he hates inactivity, and as I knew that I should never be able to get him to consent to the rest by which we alone

could hope to prevent him becoming totally blind, I did not hesitate to tell him what I thought we should have to do, and I immediately took him to see one of the best oculists in Paris, Dr. Vecker, who, after having examined the eye, told him that there was no time to be lost and that he must remove the eye. Léon wanted to wait until the Whitsuntide holidays so that his work might not suffer; but M. Vecker would not allow him to do so and he was quite right. He came on the morrow to Léon's house to make the operation. He was assisted by three assistants whom he brought with him, Péphau, our friend, who wanted to be present, and I, who watched poor Léon's pulse while he was under the influence of the chloroform. The operation was performed in really a most masterly manner, and M. Vecker was as kind and affectionate to him as it is possible to be. Your son was condemned to stay in bed and in a dark room for ten days, after which he was allowed to go into his study, where he had to keep quite still; the operation succeeded, thanks to this *régime*. A fortnight ago he began to go out with Péphau, who accompanied him to M. Vecker's house. The empty socket has already become so insensible to pain that for several days he has been able to wear a temporary glass eye which in ten days or so will, I think, be replaced by a proper eye. In short, everything passed off exceedingly well and we were all delighted, and Léon in especial, with the result. He still needs another month's rest, for the remaining eye gets tired very soon and he is not allowed to read, much less to write—which he has done, nevertheless, but at the cost of great fatigue to himself. It is only a question of time, and in future he need not fear that he will become blind.

These, dear sir, are the details which you will forgive me for omitting to send you while we were still uncertain as to how matters would go; for I dared not inform you a short time ago of this operation which you could not have prevented, and so I thought it better to say nothing about it.

I beg you, dear sir, to accept for you and yours the kindest regards of your fellow-countryman,

DR. FIEUZAL.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I do not think it kind or proper for both of us to keep such painful silence and so I have determined to beg you to write to me and to give me news of yourself. I really do not think that you can possibly reproach me for not having told you of my illness; you will have understood the reason on reading Dr. Fieuzal's letter: it was to prevent you feeling anxious and to tell you at one and the same time of my illness and my cure. I am now very well; I have begun work again. I have a lot to do and many duties to fulfil; but I hope with patience and good health to get through everything. But I need the assurance that my relations are thinking of me in the midst of my daily struggles; such knowledge gives me courage and ought to bring me good luck. We had a splendid meeting with Favre and Berryer a few days ago. My chief, J. Favre, embraced me in public, before every one, as the representative of the young men of France; I can assure you that I shed the best and the sweetest tears of my whole life. Favre wrote me an adorable letter which I will send you when we have quite made up our little dispute.

Thursday, May 30, 1867.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I was very much astonished to receive neither letters nor news from you. I cannot understand it; for I cannot believe that you are angry with me for telling you of my illness and my cure simultaneously. I wanted to spare you six weeks' anxiety; I knew that you, who are so far away, would have worried yourself unnecessarily, and I preferred to leave you in ignorance of my illness until all was over.

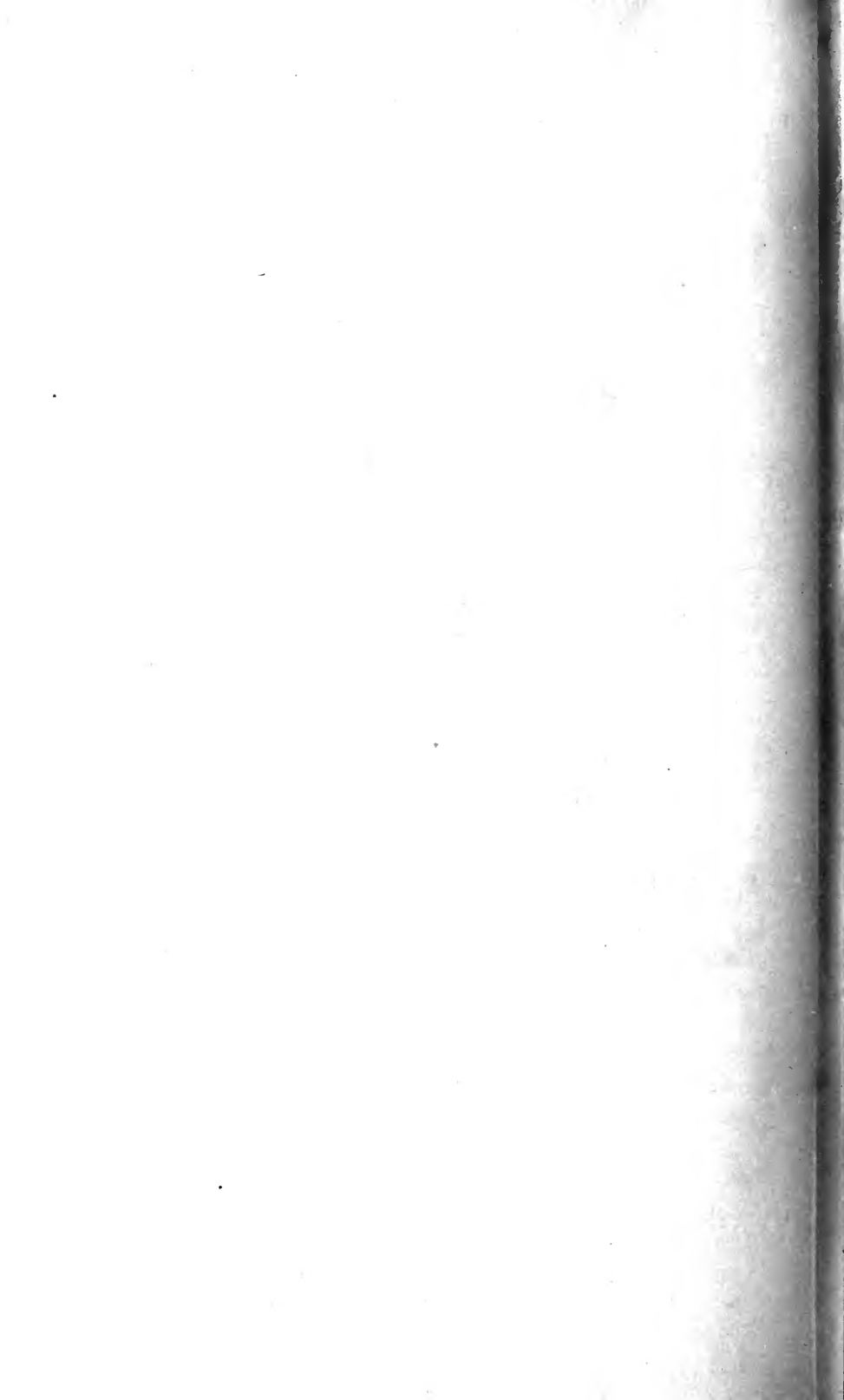
I still need to recover my strength, so I am going away for a short time to stay with my friend, Dr. Peyron, who lives an hour's journey from Paris. I hope that I shall get news of you while I am there and that you will not be more angry with me for the silence caused by my desire to spare you any anxiety, than you were during that memorable evening walk at Cahors when you flew into such a passion because I did not recognise you. If I did not know how easily you all lose your tempers, I might misconstrue your silence; but I know how good you are and I only remember your kindness. . . .

Adrien Hébrard told us lately how Gambetta happened to meet Bismarck about this time in a *café* near the opera-house renowned for its excellent German beer. It was very hot weather just then and the Exhibition was in full swing. Hébrard and Gambetta were seated before two mugs of foaming beer, chatting gaily, when Bismarck, in full uniform, accompanied by an aide-de-camp and probably on his way back from some official reception which had evidently made him very thirsty, entered the *café* and called for four or five large mugs of beer which he drank off one after the other.

The colossus seemed amused by the attention with



Mme JOSEPH GAMBETTA.
Gambetta's Mother



which the two friends watched him: he had just vanquished Austria at Sadowa and annexed Hanover notwithstanding the protests of his compatriots. Gambetta, without thinking what he was about, seized his companion's mug and was just going to drink its contents, when Hébrard caught his arm and said with a laugh—

"I say! That's my beer you're going to drink: do you think you've got hold of Hanover?"

Whereupon Bismarck, instead of being offended at this remark, burst into loud laughter with our two friends.

Gambetta's manifold duties at the *Palais de justice* were becoming powerless to deter him from taking an interest in political affairs; he realised, by the shiver of expectation which was passing through the opposition party of which he was one of the youthful leaders, and by the ever-increasing disorder of the Imperialists, that a political revolution was about to overthrow both Empire and Emperor. More assiduous than ever in his attendance at the Chamber, he seemed to have already marked out a place for himself; he was well known to all the deputies, many of whom already listened to him as if he were a valued colleague and followed his advice.

The young orator was only waiting for an opportunity to show what he was worth. That opportunity occurred on November 14, 1868, when he made his celebrated speech in defence of Delescluze, accused of having fomented a riot on the tomb of the deputy Baudin who was shot on the barricades by the troops of the *coup d'État*, December 2, 1851.

During the year 1868, Gambetta made great strides

not only in Paris but even at Cahors whither chance had led him to plead in company with Jules Favre. One of his most intimate friends of those days relates rather an amusing anecdote significant of provincial customs and manners.

“Gambetta,” he tells us, “as Jules Favre’s lieutenant, made before the tribunal of Cahors a magnificent speech which won for him an enthusiastic ovation from his fellow-townsmen. A week later, Jules Favre arrived in person at the tribunal of Cahors arm-in-arm with Gambetta’s sister, whom he was conducting to the court that she might hear her brother speak. This, in the eyes of the good folk of Cahors who, only the evening before, scarcely knew of Léon’s existence and were but little inclined to admire the son of a humble grocer, meant that his own fortune and his family’s fortunes were made. Cahors, like all other small provincial towns, looked down upon shopkeepers and such like small fry. Gambetta’s mother would never have dared ‘to wear a bonnet,’ as they said in those days. But from that day people would have thought it very strange if she had not done so, and in future she was treated as if she were a high-born lady.”

To Clément Laurier.

PARIS, June 12, 1868.

I am writing to you in great haste from the Palais Bourbon between two debates in order to calm your anxiety concerning our poor friend Challemeil. He is better; he has not got congestion of the lungs, but a slight attack of pleurisy. He needs great care, rest, and dieting. He is, in every respect, in good hands, and I think that we shall soon have him back again among

us. And we need him terribly; he is the very soul, the right hand of our party, and he is now shelved for a time; for the older I grow, the more I realise with sorrow that our excellent Henri is unfit to command or to direct our work. He is irritable, he loses his temper, he gets frightened; he takes ten times more trouble than he need do if he were cool-headed. In short, he is not suited to be a leader of men. Notwithstanding these *contretemps* our second number, which I will send you by post to-morrow, will be very attractive and full of articles on divers subjects. These articles, to the number of twelve, are all very well written with the exception, perhaps, of two or three. But the general public does not read the newspapers with the eyes of Horatius' censor. Public opinion is in our favour, and I am sure that we shall succeed.

I received some interesting details to-day concerning Servia and the assassination of Prince Michael, which was an unexpected event, calculated to disturb the peace of Europe and to re-open that interminable Eastern question. Luckily, I suspect that it was neither a case of Russian nor even Austrian intrigue, but a case of private revenge. Prince Michael was a gay spark. He courted a rich local heiress, compromised her, and then refused to marry her; her father and brothers assassinated him. And so this political and diplomatic menace resolves itself into a vulgar melodrama.

Yesterday there was a report in Paris, probably circulated in order to run up the edition of Rochefort's paper, the *Lanterne*, to 100,000 copies, that the good fellow was dead. On inquiry, I discovered that Rochefort was taking cold baths, and that this bad news was all bluff (*sic*).

An extremely grave incident has taken place at the Chamber: M. Buisson, the reporter of the budget, misinterpreted his colleagues' decisions and, notably in the case of the war budget, tried in his report to reconcile the Government and the committee, in direct opposition to the wishes expressed by the majority of the budget committee; this conduct raised a chorus of complaints and protests. Louvet is at the head of the discontented deputies. The committee assembled; Buisson was severely reprimanded and told to re-write his report. Instead of one battle, we have now got two: Targé will be known as a true prophet, and the budget will be postponed till doomsday.

The bill concerning high-roads is going to be voted to-day, as well as the bill for constructing railroads in the two departments of la Charente; but it is useless for the deputies to bring in bills at this break-neck pace, for the road is long, and August 15th will find them all assembled in order to sing a *Te Deum* in the Emperor's honour. They curse and swear, but they vote all the same. They are playing for love now, for they squandered their last remaining *centime* on May 15th. The Swiss, at least, rebelled. . . .

On November 17, 1868, on the morrow of the *Procès Baudin*—this was the somewhat inaccurate name given in future by the people to the celebrated lawsuit which was to deal such a fatal blow to the Empire—J. J. Weiss wrote in his enthusiasm:—

“The emotion aroused by M. Gambetta's eloquence was such that people thought—and we do not exaggerate when we say this—of the fame of Cicero and the Pro Roscio!”

On the evening of the trial, at the Tuileries, where Léon Gambetta's speech had spread consternation as it had sent a tremour of feverish expectation and warlike ardour through Paris and the whole of France, the Empress, much affected, anxiously asked M. Bédarrides, attorney-general at the Court of Appeal—

“But what have we done to this young man that he hates us so?”

The *Revue politique* said: “People still talked of Sadowa, Mexico, and the Pope on the eve of the trial; on the morrow, no one talked of anything but the *Deux Décembre*; and the Empire, born of a criminal act, was condemned.”

M. Jules Claretie relates in the following terms his impressions of the scene:—

“One felt when M. Léon Gambetta began to speak in the Baudin case that this young man, but lately a clerk in M. Crémieux's office, would soon be celebrated. M. Vivien, the president of the tribunal, together with the substitute Aulois, who occupied the chair of the public minister, watched this young advocate drawing himself up ready for battle, throwing back his long, thick, black locks from his forehead, and fixing his strange gaze on the Court. . . .

“Then M. Léon Gambetta, in a clear, sonorous voice full of sweetness and power, a voice which charmed and thundered by turns, began his speech in defence of Charles Delescluze, principal editor of the *Réveil*, the same Delescluze who, later, during the siege, called his defender of November 14th, “*that artful Genoese!*” Did I say the speech for the defence of Delescluze? It was a strange sort of defence! Or rather it was no defence at all: it was Gambetta who attacked. With

a peal of thunder against the Empire, he pleaded for his client, the convict of Cayenne. He seized the men of December by the throat and ordered them to acquit the outlaw. . . . And while the imperial advocate tried to stem this flood of avenging lava, these humiliating terms, this terrible speech which all France was to read on the morrow, Gambetta coolly continued his *cantilena*, grew more excited, more elated, drowned his antagonist's voice by his powerful organ, *drowned* him—he himself used the term—and with dishevelled locks, disordered dress, his jacket unbuttoned, with bared neck, (his necktie had disappeared) like another O'Connell roaring at the bar, the advocate threatened, stormed, accused, crushed his adversary and fell back exhausted on his bench, while applause burst forth, hailing both the dawn of reparation and the rising young tribune. Léon Gambetta was a celebrity on the morrow."

December 31, 1868.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I do not want the year 1869 to begin without writing to you to wish you long life and a happy old age ; though Fate seemed inclined for some time to frown upon us, she now seems more favourably disposed towards us. You must all know that I shall only value her favours as long as I can share them with you.

So, let us bid farewell to anxieties and discussions, kiss each other, and wish one another good luck. It is a necessary wish, and at the same time a wish which can easily be realised ; for it only depends on ourselves ; and whether we be in the right or in the wrong, we need only listen to our own hearts to find ourselves bound together by family affection.

So I kiss you on both cheeks and order you to pay

this debt of affection to my sister and to my little mother.

You can guess that it is only right to include my aunt in all these wishes, for I always think of her as a model of self-sacrifice and amiability.

So this is understood: a new year is dawning for us. It promises to be productive of blessings and perhaps even glory for me; but it will also bring me terrible trials, and I quite realise that I shall never have to face more fearful dangers than those of the coming year.

But thanks be to God, I am ready for everything; and confident in the love of liberty which beats in my breast, I shall emerge victorious. Only let me, in the heat of the battle, at least know and feel that my dear ones are on my side.

So I wish you unity, love, and prosperity; these words and wishes I send you with my kisses. Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Alphonse Daudet relates in his personal memoirs of 1869:—

“Gambetta, in consequence of his speech in the *Procès Baudin*, was in a fair way to become a great man. The old stagers of the Republican party, the combatants of '51, the exiles, the *vieilles barbes*, loved the young tribune with a truly paternal affection; the *faubourgs* considered the “one-eyed advocate” capable of doing anything; the young men swore by him. I met him on one occasion; he said that he was going to be elected deputy; that he had just made a great speech at Lyons or Marseilles! He was always on the go; he always seemed to smell gunpowder, and was always as excited

as if he had just won a great battle; he talked in a loud voice, shook one's hand vigorously while he tossed back his hair with that well-known quick gesture. He charmed every one; he was more familiar than ever with his friends, and he willingly allowed people to stop him in the street in order to chat and laugh with him. "So you want me to lunch with you at Meudon?" replied he to one of his friends who had just invited him; 'I shall be delighted to do so! but some other day—when we have put an end to the Empire!'"

To Clément Laurier, 17 Rue Joubert, Paris.

CAHORS, March 10, 1869.

You ask why I do not write to you? . . . It is because I am the laziest man that ever existed. I left Paris fully a week ago; on an average I have held two and sometimes three meetings every day. But everything is progressing favourably; if the North and the Centre could tune themselves up to the pitch of the South, we should go ahead and reach the winning-post.

I am quite proud of your popularity both here and at Bordeaux and Toulouse. I have been offered a candidature for you at Villefranche d'Aveyron. As you can well imagine, I represent our political friendship as a dogma. I am staying at Cahors for a few days. I am worn out; the weather is horrible, and you can guess that the *régime* which I am obliged to follow does not improve the condition of my stomach. As soon as I am patched up, I shall fly off to Nîmes and Marseilles, but I will write to you beforehand. And then I must wait until after my sister's marriage which, I believe, is to take place on the 17th or 18th. Between this and then I shall pay a flying visit to Montauban, Agen, and my own

department, and then I shall return for the marriage ceremony.

À propos of Montauban, I must tell you that I have met Adrien Hébrard of the *Temps* here; he seems depressed and disconcerted. His candidature has come to nought, and his idea of a *suffrage universel* was so coolly received that I think he will give it up.

And now let us talk of our own affairs; it seems to me that something unusual is happening in Paris. I see by the papers that Hérold is going to stand. We shall see. They write me that Carnot may possibly withdraw from the contest; it is still too early to say whether this rumour is true or not. As for yourself, go ahead. Organise meetings, if you have not already done so. The night before my departure I dined and had a long talk with Ténôt; but, alas! the wind has shifted from that quarter! I fancy the fact that Durier is standing against Ollivier, the *Siècle's* candidate, will force Ténôt to relinquish all idea of opposing Darimon, and therefore ruin all my plans and calculations; for the *Siècle* cannot support two candidates, and Durier is evidently preventing Ténôt from standing. So I have completely regained my liberty in that quarter. I consulted him as to your opposing Pagès and as to the probable attitude of the *Siècle*; he replied that he considered your candidature extremely useful, that Pagès would be very poorly supported, and that, if they could manage to come to terms with the *Siècle*, no one would give another thought to him.

I do not know what these assertions are worth, but at least they prove that everything is still uncertain and that the electors' conduct, judging from the committees, may influence the newspapers' opinions. So we must

work in that direction. You see that the result of my conversation with Ténôt was more negative than reassuring and that is why I hesitated to tell you about it.

To Clément Laurier.

April, 1869.

I have received no letter from you, and yet I sent you a remarkably quick answer for a lazy dog like me. In short, this is what I want you to do: I want you to go to Lille in my place and to plead a case which I know you will turn to good account; and you will be received with open arms. I hope I have blown your trumpet sufficiently well to insure you a hearty reception.

So post the little note enclosed and write yourself to Masure if you think fit, so that you can choose a day which will not upset your other arrangements too much. Ah! my poor boy, what a miserably sick creature am I! I have not put my nose outside the door for a fortnight, and I cough as if I were at the last gasp; if my hide were not very thick, I should soon give up the ghost. And then I am bored to death; my electors pester me. I told them that I would accept *on condition*. I try to put off the evil hour; but I see that I shall have to take the fatal step and fight Carnot. I propose to organise a glorious campaign; I have been concocting a plan of operations which I will submit to your approval and which will make a little noise in the world when it comes off. Write to me and love me. . . .

To Clément Laurier, Hôtel des Princes, Madrid.

CAHORS, April 2, 1869.

I am still writing from this cursed Cahors, where I threaten to stay for ever and aye while waiting for the

spring which obstinately refuses to come. I received a letter from you, dated from Marseilles, enclosed in an envelope addressed to G. Naquet. How is it that you had letters waiting for you at the office of the *Peuple*? Come what may, I must soon go to Marseilles. I hold a meeting there on April 11th; I am delighted to be able to inform you of that fact, for I shall go from there to the department of le Var; if, as they say, Lescuyer d'Attainville withdraws in order to enter the Senate, you may really have a chance to succeed. At all events, no matter what happens, it is a good thing that you determined to accept it, and they will be grateful for this act of devotion on your part to the cause. If we meet with Ollivier and a new official candidate in le Var, you must try to pull through by dint of working very hard. The people of Marseilles obstinately affirm that I can, that I must pass before *every one* in their native town. I am going to inspect the promised land with my own eyes, and I will send you my impressions.

As to Paris, I have burnt my ships behind me. However, I told you I was going to do so in the last letter which I sent you from Paris, and which you cannot have received, for you wrote me that very same day that you were starting for Madrid.

Yes, my dear Clément, *alea jacta est!* I am going to stand for the first division, and, notwithstanding the dangers of this candidature, irrespective of newspapers and committees, I hope to triumph much more easily than I should have done in Darimon's division. And then I promised to do so, and I cannot break my promise. The good fellows of the first division have fulfilled all the conditions I demanded of them. So I only have to yield, which I do very gladly.

But that is quite another story : by the way in which you speak of the *Siècle*, it seems to me that you may possibly become *its candidate in opposition to Darimon*. Durier ought to help you in this arrangement ; and as for me, I will say nothing about the matter, notwithstanding your painful insinuations concerning the Guéroutt affair. I am persuaded that we shall often disagree over trifles during our course through life, but I affirm that we shall never really think differently about important things. You must be so well aware that you are the only man on earth for whom I would sacrifice everything, that you ought to have no fear on that head.

And it is because I know that you feel as I do and that we have both been sufficiently tried, that the brotherly affection which I bear for you, and which nothing can break, seems quite natural and spontaneous to me. How could you think that I could hesitate between you and Ferry or any one else ?

I do not agree with you concerning Guéroutt. I do not wish to accept this division either for myself or for Brisson, whom I like, however, but who is almost indifferent to me compared to yourself. I have often told you my reasons : I think they still hold good. The division is very bad ; men like ourselves would only get Jouvencel's fifteen hundred votes—and that I should wish neither for you nor for myself. People say that Ferry will, in all probability, be elected ; events will prove the truth of this assertion, although I myself do not believe that he will be successful ; but he certainly is most *fitted* to stand for the division.

Remember what I told you about Darimon's leavings, and as soon as you return to Paris, which must be soon, go and see about the matter ; and then, as my acceptance

of the first division is by no means official, tell me if you want me to give a hint to Louis Gourdon, Peyrat and Delescluze. You yourself will know how to settle Durier.

The conclusion of your letter is quite idiotic. How can you think that I should accept such a sacrifice? I am convinced that we can do nothing in politics unless we join forces and are united; but he who gets in first will let the other in. I am sure of this, and I might prove it to you, perhaps, if you were unlucky in le Var and I were lucky elsewhere.

PARIS, *April 21, 1869.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have been back in Paris for the last two days; I have begun to pick up the thread of affairs. I find that I have got quite a good idea of things in general, although I have been staying in a far-away province: everything will go smoothly, and I think I shall be able to defeat Carnot without any help from newspapers or deputies. I know that it will be a hard tussle; but I feel stronger and the elections will soon be over; I am ready to face this new contest. The sun of Marseilles has given me real strength, and I am quite sure that I shall not fall ill again between this and the end of May.

A propos of Marseilles, I must tell you that my impressions are quite favourable. I think I shall succeed if M. Thiers does not oppose me; they tell me here that the people of Lille made an express condition with him that he was to give up all thought of Marseilles if he wished them to vote for him—and so he accepted their conditions. So I have all the more chance, which means I must pay a visit to Marseilles after I have got everything ready and organised here in Paris. But you can

guess that all these journeys and ever-increasing expenses have left me without any money. I shall therefore be much obliged if you will send me, as soon as possible, the thousand francs which you have been able to lend me, thanks to your excellent position; I warn you that I am in a hurry and that I count upon your usual promptitude.

I could not spare time to come to Cahors on my way South; my business at the *Palais* obliged me to return to Paris as soon as possible. So I had to deny myself the pleasure of embracing you at Cahors; but the time is coming when we shall be free, and then we shall be able to meet again. . . .

PARIS, April 24, 1869.

. . . The present Chamber finishes its task to-day, and so the elections will probably begin on May 16th. At all events, they will begin not later than May 23rd or 24th, and I am glad of it: I long to see them finished. My stomach and my bronchitis are both better; but I begin to feel so tired that I see I shall be unable to keep up this pace much longer.

To comfort you, I will tell you that everything is going on well. The electors of the first division seem more and more inclined to prefer me to Carnot, and I now certainly have more chance of success than he has. At Marseilles, notwithstanding the fact that I have friends among all the different parties, my success is less certain; but no matter what happens, I shall at least have a fair minority. I dare not count on more than that; for I have just heard that something which I have been dreading for the last three months is about to happen: M. Thiers is standing for the same division as myself against M. de Lesseps. As we agree, we might manage to come to terms; but I much

fear that he will get many more votes than me ; however, although his interference vexes me, I console myself by thinking that he will find it much more easy to entice the conservative shopkeepers away from M. de Lesseps than I should. I will let you know how the matter ends.

Just at present I am fairly satisfied with my health and with my own affairs. I am delighted to hear that you are really thinking of retiring from business ; it is time to put a stop to this life of toil and privation ; in another month we shall be enjoying rest and sunshine on the seashore. As soon as you let me know that you are ready, I will send you the lease. What do you think of the people who are going to buy your business ? Do you still like them ?

PARIS, *May 4*, 1869.

. . . Ah ! I long to have done with it all ! I am so tired ; I count the days on my fingers. It seems to me as if the elections would never come. When shall we be able to bask in the sunshine on the sandy shore ? When ? . . . In June for certain.

I am delighted to see that your affairs are far enough advanced to allow you to help me without asking aid of any stranger. I will send you your lease whenever you ask for it ; but I am quite reassured, when I hear you speak so well of your successor. You have probably seen in the papers that I am going to give up the first division for the seventh, Darimon's division. It is a lie, an odious calumny. I do not break my promises ; I promised the good people of Belleville to stand for their division, and, come what may, I shall stick to them ; however, the wind is in my favour, and so I have great hopes of success.

Everything is going on well at Marseilles—so well,

in fact, that M. Thiers has gone there to try and spoil my little game and push me off the nest. I resist and shall continue to do so. I shall probably go to Marseilles before long. I am very sorry that I can tell you no more; but the electoral devil is treading on my heels and so I must be off.

I welcomed the young bride* and her groom last Thursday. They are both in excellent health. They adore each other. Benedetta is quite perfect.

* His sister, Benedetta, who married the engineer Jouinot.

IV

GAMBETTA THE DEPUTY

To Clément Laurier.

MARSEILLES, May 19, 1869.

I recommend to you our staunch friend, Yves Guyot, principal editor of the *Indépendant*, of Nîmes. It was I who sent him to Nîmes. The Moderate party has ousted him from his position and, by a rather clever but very despicable manœuvre, entrapped him.

You will certainly find time to talk to him, and, if you can, you will soon do him a good turn. He is absolutely trustworthy; we must summon him back to Paris, where we can rely upon his devotion and his intelligence, both of which are proof against all temptations.

Everything is going on well here; and if Fortune will only smile upon me during the elections, you may consider that she belongs to both of us for ever.*

* Gambetta was elected in Paris, May 24, 1869, with 21,734 votes. Carnot only obtained 9,142. At Marseilles, Gambetta at the first balloting obtained 8,663 votes; M. de Lesseps, 4,535; Thiers, 3,582; and Barthélémy, 3,075. By the second balloting of June 6th and 7th Gambetta obtained 12,868 votes and M. de Lesseps 5,066. Thiers and Barthélémy had retired from the contest. Gambetta, on being elected, chose, as he had promised to do, Marseilles. But he became so ill that his friends thought that he was going into a

PARIS, *July 1, 1869.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I write to you in a great hurry in the midst of my preparations for my departure for the baths of Cauterets. I shall start on Tuesday at the latest; I am taking my aunt, so that she may take care of me, as she knows how to do to perfection.

I cannot tell you much about the matter; only kindly send me, as you offered to do, the last thousand francs. I am delighted to see you free at last from all worries; it is only right that you should enjoy a well-earned rest.* I will come and see you very often, and you shall return my visits as often as possible.

To Clément Laurier.

July, 1869.

I did not write to you, because the parliamentary devil has been treading on my heels ever since your departure, not to speak of the devil of ill-health, who pursues me with more obstinacy than ever.

However, I do not regret my remissness; for Paris has been in such an unsettled condition for some time past that it is difficult really to know what is going on. I will now tell you what people think.

The Chamber is going on very well; the Left, all except Raspail, is spirited and well knit together. The consumption. He succeeded Berryer as deputy for the Bouches-du-Rhône. Berryer had died the previous year, after having publicly given his approbation to the subscription in favour of erecting a monument over Baudin's grave.

* Joseph Gambetta had retired from business that year and had gone with his wife to live at Nice in a little house on the road to Villefranche. Their son never failed to pay them a yearly visit and spend his holidays with them, according to the long cherished wish of the family since the childhood of Gambetta, when Nice was still only French by predilection.

majority is uneasy, prolix, and threatening. Rouher has been the cause of a very serious debate. If the Centre continues to show a brave face, we may expect better days: but who can say whether the Centre will be courageous or not? Neither Duvernoy nor Ollivier——
Let us say no more and wait!

Let us now talk of your affairs. The first division is on fire. You must have heard that Rochefort has just been sentenced to three years' imprisonment, to a fine of ten thousand francs, and to be deprived of all his civil and political rights during the space of three years. This would simplify matters singularly; but the lawyers have just discovered that the sentence of deprivation of civil and political rights for an offence committed against the sovereign only commences *after the term of imprisonment has expired* (Article 86 of the Penal Code). So Rochefort is still eligible, and the judicial outrage which he has just endured will only increase the people's sympathy for him. If Rochefort allows this state of affairs to continue, a rival candidate will have no chance. I cannot hide the truth from you; but since this, the last phase in the affair, one can see that it would be very imprudent of you to continue to offer yourself as a candidate. So I am going to open up negotiations (but that doesn't mean that I promise anything) for an election with a pronounced majority and only one balloting, on condition that the lucky candidate shall resign after his election. If I succeed, you must throw yourself body and soul into the movement, and thus the future will be assured. I shall soon know all about it, and then I will write you my final decision.

Here is another piece of news: Marc Dufraisse refuses to stand for the fourth division. Picard has chosen

Montpellier. There is no very promising candidate for that division; it might be as well to see about it, as your mind, character, your business capacities, your temperament and the opinions of these electors are adequate and not dissimilar. What do you think about the matter?

Think it over and then let me know your decision. As for me, I cannot give you my exact impression for fear of being false to my duty as a friend. The first division *at present* seems to me to be beyond your reach, whereas the fourth appears free. Choose. Anyhow, I will see that no one poaches.

I am delighted with the state of affairs in the East and I know quite enough of your perspicacity to be able to hope. Let me tell you that young Hervé, of the *Journal de Paris*, started a few days ago for Belgrade. *Quid?*

I am still very unwell. I am starting for the baths of Ems after a long consultation with the medical faculty.*

Ems, July 10, 1869.

MY DEAR FATHER,—At last, as I feel a little rested from my fatigues and from all my numerous anxieties, I can write you a few lines about my new abode. I am at Ems, in Prussia, whither I have been sent by my doctors in Paris after a long and careful examination. They did not send me to Cauterets, because the air there is too keen and the waters too strong, besides which the latter are sulphurous and I need very mild and highly alkaline waters. You remember, in fact, that my stomach was quite as much affected as my lungs. It seems that I am

* The medical faculty confirmed the opinion of Dr. Lacassagne, who was then assistant-surgeon at the military hospital at Marseilles.

going to be completely cured of all my maladies. I hope so; however, I have made a good beginning. I sleep and eat fairly well, and I can digest the waters quite easily.

Before leaving Paris I received the one-thousand-franc note completing the sum which I owed you, and which I will repay you as we agreed I should do.

I am well looked after, but the prices would frighten even a rich banker. However, I must resign myself to my fate. And then the greatest misfortune which could possibly happen to me has happened: I have lost—or someone has stolen, I don't know which—my purse containing eight hundred francs. I make the best of it, for one has to make the best of everything, especially when one cannot do otherwise; but I shall have to work extra hard in order to make up for my loss.

I did not bring my good aunt for several reasons; first of all, because I was going to a foreign country; secondly, because the expense would have been too great—I should have had to spend nearly forty francs a day, and that I could not afford; thirdly, because someone must look after my apartment. Lastly, one of my friends, a hospital doctor, brought me here, where he is nursing me like a brother. I am sorry not to be at my post, but I try to console myself by thinking that I am laying in a store of good health for the coming winter. The doctors swore to cure me, and so I started. Ah! if they should be mistaken! But I won't let my mind dwell upon such melancholy things. Besides, it would be foolish to do so, for I already feel much better since my arrival here and I begin to hope. Now that I am free from all anxiety, I will write to you more often concerning my health.

Meanwhile, take care of your own health. I embrace you.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Here is my address: L. Gambetta, Deputy, Maison Mayence, c/o Dr. Busch, Ems, Prussia.

To Clément Laurier, Constantinople.

Ems, July 15, 1869.

I am answering your last letter from this far-away little village in Nassau. As I told you in my last letter, I had to leave Paris in order to drink the waters here. I wish with all my heart to get well; for if my health were to continue in its present condition, I would much rather die, for I should be obliged to give up my political career and to drag out a miserable existence as an invalid in some out-of-the-way corner of the world. You can understand how wretched I feel; I am absent from my post and shelved even before I have seen any service. I cannot resign myself to my fate. Luckily I received some consoling news yesterday; the Emperor, after having sent his reformist message, which he made the Chamber read, has thought fit to accept his Ministers' resignation, to prorogue the Chamber of Deputies indefinitely, and to convene the Senate for August 2nd. Some time will elapse before the senators will be able to agree between themselves, nominate commissions and reporters, and discuss their plans in public. Their labours will then be interrupted by the *fêtes* of August 10th. The session of the *États généraux* for the whole of France is bound to open on August 25th. The deputies and the senators will be obliged to attend, and thus matters will drag on until the month of September—that is to say, when the vintage begins and everyone takes a holiday. I do not think that an *efficacious meeting* of the Chamber

is likely to take place before the end of October, and I am delighted to think that my enforced idleness will not look as if I had run away.

This entirely selfish way of looking at the matter will, however, do no harm to our party's interests in general. Nothing more favourable to our cause could be imagined: the confusion, the uneasiness of our rulers is visible to all beholders. The Government is not yielding—it is fleeing. This prorogation, which is nothing but a clumsy shot in the dark, irritates public opinion like an insolent *coup d'État*. The reforms which preceded it bear the stamp of impotency and nullity. They do not even satisfy the cravens; they exasperate genuine parliamentarians; they mean nothing to the general public.

It is remarkable, moreover, that the powers that be seem to have forgotten the import of the *suffrage universel*, which, a few years ago, they tried their best, with the help of theories and equivocal democratic manœuvres, to pamper and corrupt. To-day they turn their back upon democracy. Although they are accustomed to rule the roost, they are at last beginning to come to terms. They are quite discountenanced and they know that their days are numbered. The Chamber will soon recover all its power and influence, and, with a little help from us, we shall witness an exact repetition of the events of December 2nd—a Chamber dispossessing the monarch.

You can well imagine why, with all these events crowding one after the other, the partial elections in Paris have been adjourned to the latest possible date. So you have plenty of time before you. And then, you must have thought over my long letter. I am secretly convinced that, under these conditions, and after the sentence which has been passed upon Rochefort, nobody

will be able to refuse to vote for him, and that because he represents a gigantic protest. I have received no reply as to his resignation, which would insure success to our plans. The other divisions have already been invaded, but are not yet occupied. At present I cannot see which candidate they intend to choose. Picard has at last fixed on Montpellier; whereupon Dufaure, Crémieux and Didier immediately announce their intention to stand for that town. The three latter gentlemen seem to me to be rather too well seasoned.

Marc Dufraisse has declined; I received the letter confirming his decision four days ago. We still have Floquet; I should like him, as you know; but he would have no chance in Paris. Lastly, that you may know my real opinion upon the matter, I think that what is now happening may lead to a veritable dissolution of the Chamber and to a general re-election. If the pseudo-Liberal, but, in reality, very parliamentary movement which is now sweeping away the Empire is directed by new men, the present majority will have to be done away with. M.M. Buffet and Ollivier, who, sooner or later, will become Ministers, cannot keep a hostile majority to support them. They will be safer with a Chamber chiefly composed of their friends; if they are wise, they will demand new elections. I believe that this will really happen before six months have elapsed.

In short, everything is possible: conjectures are endless. You can draw your own conclusions from these hints, but it is more prudent to wait and to watch.

I have met Challemeil here. We talk a great deal together; he refrains from mentioning the elections. I have touched upon the subject two or three times; but he always shuts me up or changes the conversation.

He seems to have recovered his health completely and he almost makes me envious, for I cough and my fits of cold perspiration are more frequent than ever. I do not know when these horrible attacks will cease; but I assure you that I am suffering a great deal, and that if it were not for my ever-increasing hope that we shall soon do away with the Empire, I should scarcely be able to endure it. I embrace you; I am going off to drink the waters.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

EMS, *July 15, 1869.*

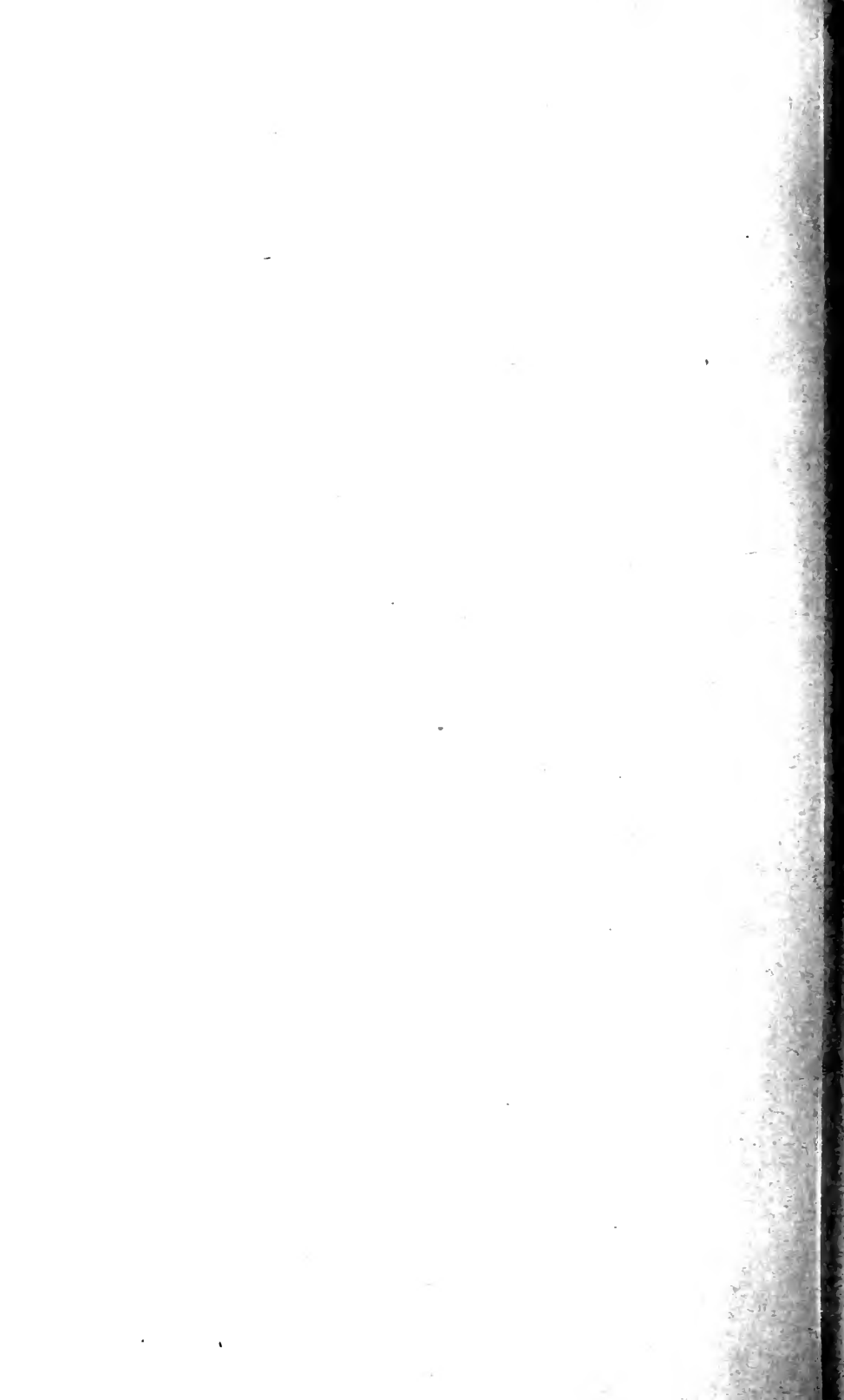
MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just received your kind and fatherly letter; it has quite touched me, and I thank you for it from the bottom of my heart and for all the consolations which you send me. You were quite right when you said that depression was the worst part of an illness. I feel that it is so, and I am doing my very best to shake it off and to drive it away. It is as much as I can do to keep free of its clutches even for a few minutes at a time; it soon recovers the ground which I had so much trouble to wrest from its grasp. Exercise, sleep, and even insipid conversation cannot make me forget that irritating thought which ever returns to my mind: "that I was missing from my post on the very first day of the battle." No reasoning can fight against this cruel fatality. It is useless for me to rebuke myself, to prove to myself that I had to yield to superior force, to obey Nature; it is no good, and my vexation increases more and more, like a wave that has been repelled for a moment but at last ends by breaking down all barriers.

But yesterday I received a piece of news which comforted and reassured me: Bonaparte has just committed

an act of desperation which strongly resembles a *coup d'État*. He has prorogued the Chamber; this may last longer than we think. I imagine the consequences of the last week's events in Paris will be incalculable; so I am waiting to reflect before I predict anything, which does not prevent me from sending my daily remarks to my friends of the Left and receiving their replies with great punctuality. But, between ourselves, this rôle of a hermit in a desert is not much to my taste; and as regards my own selfish opinion, I am delighted with the momentary dissolution; it furnishes me with an excuse for my absence and a reply to all my scruples. But all this political prattle is less important to you than news of my health. Here are my personal impressions; I will then tell you what my physicians say. As to my general state, I feel a little better. I eat very well and I can keep everything down. I still suffer from flatulence, but it no longer hurts me. I sleep wonderfully well, from eight o'clock in the evening until six the next morning without waking. I drink the waters with great facility; so far I have felt none of the feverish symptoms from which one usually suffers at the beginning of a cure. I can walk with greater ease, but I still perspire freely. This last infirmity weakens me tremendously; at the slightest effort a clammy perspiration breaks out all over my body. They say that the baths will do away with this horrid weakness; at present I have noticed no good results in that quarter. At last I am beginning to cough less; but when the fits of coughing do come, they are more severe: this is the first effect of the waters. And now to end these depressing details: I cannot ascend a flight of stairs or climb the smallest hill without losing my breath. Ah! I really believe that I have got emphy-



GAMBETTA in 1869



sema, which is something like the beginning of asthma. You see, I am in a pretty bad way; but I am less disgusted with my own body than I was on arriving here. Besides, the climate is very mild, the scenery is pretty and the people sociable. I should be quite happy, were it not for the demon of politics!

And what do the doctors think?

Answer: They swear to cure me.

Let us wait and hope. I embrace both you and mama.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

To Clément Laurier.

Ems, July 22, 1869.

I have just received two letters from you, one dated from Paris, the other from Constantinople. A few days ago I received that which contained Challemel's long theory concerning his plans for the elections.

You may think that I cannot undertake, in my present state of health, to reply to all the questions contained in these multifarious documents. I am going, as usual, to tell you what I think, what I really think, and to give you what I consider the best advice. I do not think that you need fear that Challemel will prove a very formidable rival; but if we judge from his very explicit letter and his very significant silence on this subject while he was at Ems, he will persevere to the very end, but he will not go against Rochefort, whose political inferiority he, like me, deplures, but who, at the *present* moment and *not* later, seems to him not only invincible but incontestable. This has been my opinion for some time, but I will *never*, no matter what happens, back such a candidate; and reasons are not wanting which order me to abstain from such an alliance. Let us wait

for our opportunity. And then, all these questions are adjourned for the present; what I wrote you in one of my letters is already coming true. The provisional prorogation has become a definite prorogation. They are going to speechify in the Senate; and this will carry us on to the end of August. *Conseils généraux*, holidays and the vintage will then occupy all minds. Anything to gain time! . . . And then at the end of it all, people will see that they have only been wasting time; and when the Cabinet finds that it can count upon a strong majority, it will make up its mind to take the step which I saw, at the very beginning of the crisis, they would take: the dissolution and general elections will take place. There is no earthly reason why there should not be a *coup d'État* and elections in the style of those which took place during the Reign of Terror. But we are working up for dissolution; everything points to that event. It means not only the dissolution but the decomposition of the entire Empire; and whether there be an effort at reproducing the scenes of *Fructidor*, an *V*, or not, the next appeal to the country will give us an enormous and decisive minority, in which we shall share.

Now that things are hurrying up, you must know that I desire nothing better than to be by your side when we have to face the guns, and that I shall leave no stone unturned to bring that about; but you do not rely on my friendship for you, and you always repeat your absurd recriminations, which I have proved to be utterly inane over and over again. You would never have been elected by the sixth division, and I saved you from a humiliating defeat; but I will not insist, and will never mention the subject again.

As to finding you a post, I will take care that

you get something, not because I am proud to love you as a friend, but because I know that you possess brilliant and useful qualities. But I must beg you to exercise a little patience and to trust in me. I am not old enough, and my position is not sufficiently assured, to assume the airs of a patron of deserving talent: the *suffrage universel* demands, and has a right to expect, more regard and respect.

And probably the surest way to succeed is to avoid wounding its feelings of independence. But I am particularly anxious to see you in the political arena; for, if my ill-health continues until the next session, I shall feel it my duty to return my mandate to the electors of Marseilles, who did not confide it to me that I might drag it about from one watering-place to another, and I shall beg them to transfer their votes to you.

As to Esquiros' affair, although he may have really committed the offence with which they reproach him, he has been a member of our *Assemblée* since 1842, the date of the offence in question, so he is quite safe. Besides, I do not think that the present Chamber would dare to insist on that score. And then I revert to my first opinion: will the present deputies ever combine forces?—No.

So you may be quite sure that I shall consider it my duty to back you with all my might and main at Marseilles; it would be an excellent school for you. I am going to write to Esquiros to know exactly how he is getting on and what is happening; I will keep you advised.

Ems, July 25, 1869.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I really feel better to-day, so I hasten to send you news of myself. My cure has not done very much for me at present; sometimes I am well,

at other times not quite so well, and sometimes worse ; in fact, my condition varies from day to day.

However, I am very hopeful, which is a great improvement. Only a few days ago I was feeling rather cross and distrustful about the future. The doctor's care, Fieuzal's promises, the mild climate, and also the effects of the baths have calmed me. I am in better spirits ; I am getting accustomed to my exile from the political arena, and I am taking every care of myself, although I sometimes omit some of the doctor's minute directions. I am rather proud of having turned over a new leaf, for it is always with the greatest difficulty that I can make up my mind to take care of my bodily and mental health ; the only way is to persevere and to feel proud of one's perseverance. Besides, they pamper me tremendously here ; every one overwhelms me with attentions and kindness. I am really quite overcome ; I can hardly bear all these attentions, for I am always afraid of being considered conceited. I get away from them as much as possible ; but I am not always very skilful in my plans for retreat. All this has one advantage, and that is that it makes my stay here quite agreeable and pleasant ; I am no longer bored, and I am growing quite serious over my *rôle* as an interesting invalid. Even the King of Prussia,* who is now in Ems, asks after my health ; and yet he is not in ignorance of my hatred for the victors of Sadowa. Is he really aware of it ? I don't know much about it, but I much fear that I am suffering from a severe attack of conceit. At all events, if I recover soon, and if I am permitted to discuss foreign politics in our rostrum, I shall do my best to let him know it once and for all.

* William, who, in the following year, was to be crowned Emperor of Germany at Versaille.

But let us leave this subject, which the medical faculty has forbidden me to discuss, and let us talk business. I consider that you are taking a long time to leave Cahors. How about the settlement of your accounts? Do you expect to be through soon, and to be able to enjoy, by the side of your old foster-mother, the sea, the rest to which your life of hard work entitles you? You tell me nothing of your plans and your projects.

Answer me, and let me know for certain; I cannot beg you to give my love to any one in particular, but I know very well that you know how to choose, and that you will give news of me to those who love me.

However, I make an exception in the case of my dear Edouard,* who ought to write to me. Embrace mama and accept my kisses. Ever yours,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PS.—If you knew German I would send you a capital paper published at Coblenz in which they have discovered that I am Napoleon III.'s nearest relative through my great grandmother; that is no doubt the cause of my obstinate refusal to make friends.

To Clément Laurier.

EMS, July 28, 1869.

. . . I shall be quite contented when I see you devote all your splendid talents to politics. The latter, however, are in a very bad way; the Left has made a huge blunder and obliged me to break silence. I have just sent the electors of the first division a *lettre-programme*

* E. Reilhé, formerly Mayor of Cahors, at that time a *Conseiller général*.

in order to show them that I am not responsible for this conduct, which I was powerless to prevent.

The document is rather long ; I have not got a copy of it, but I will send it to you as soon as it is published in a newspaper. I sent it to the *Siècle*. I expect there will be a row over it, but I am accustomed to that!

My health is just the same. I am well in every respect except my cough, which still continues and is more tiresome than ever. I much fear that I shall find myself no better at the end of my cure, and then I don't know what they will do with me. I feel tired, but I am resigned—I am waiting.

July 28, 1869.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have received your kind letter, and I am delighted to see that your affairs, both concerning your business and your house, are really near completion. Like yourself, I do not think that we need worry about the price, and I think that the mortgage is sufficiently safe to insure us against any loss.

I think that the price of fourteen thousand francs for the house is pretty good. You would do well to accept it, especially if they give you a fairly large instalment or if they offer you sound securities. You will let me know all about the matter in your reply. Tell me also the date of your departure, that I may be able to send you news of myself.

I do not know when I shall be able to come and see you, although I long to do so ; but I am not sure when my cure will be over. And then I don't know where my doctors will send me after I leave this place. Fieuzal wrote me in one of his last letters that the South would not do for me yet. But I am glad to think that, so far,

nothing has been decided. I believe that they really intend to send me to Switzerland, that I may breathe the fresh air of the Alps. I should much prefer this to staying in my narrow German dale.

I do not know if it is the effect of the waters or of the reassuring news which I receive from all quarters, but I am really better. I still cough a great deal on rising in the morning, but one cannot expect a complaint of such long standing to yield to three weeks' treatment; I gladly resign myself to wait until the end of my cure. Moreover, I have lately had occasion, *à propos* of the foolish conduct of the Left, to address a letter to my constituents, and since then I feel quite cheerful, for I know that I have done my duty. I do not know as yet if it has been reproduced in the newspapers, so I am in the dark as to what effect it will have, and I must do my best to wait patiently until I hear the result. You might write me your and other people's opinions about the matter.

I receive capital news from Marseilles; they expect me there on August 9th, but I shall not be able to go; I am in despair. Ah! when shall I be well again?

But there I go! beginning to whine again instead of concluding my letter! . . .

To Clément Laurier.

MONTREUX, September 6, 1869.

. . . I am delighted to see that you have plucked up courage again and that you have changed your mind as to retreating. You are very wise to do so, for the fact that Rochefort has been pardoned by an amnesty and that he refuses to return to Paris can only have a salutary effect upon the elections in the first division

of Paris ; only I feel that you must now regret your imprudence in mentioning your intention to retire from the contest to your opponent. But I suppose you notified the matter to him in the usual terms ; however, we must be on our guard against any mean squabbles.

I was rather glad to learn from you that you had already had some private interviews with Braleret's friends. It is absolutely necessary to see and examine the candidate during these little preliminary interviews. I think that by repeating these interviews you will pave the way for larger meetings, which, however, are nothing but solemn receptions and are not nearly so efficacious as a private interview. However, they will be useful because they will enable you to display your valuable faculties. Notwithstanding the slightly bitter tone of your letters, I still continue to believe, as on the first day of option, that you are far and away the best and the most suitable of all the candidates. I have always said so, as, for instance, at a dinner given by Flament, Carpentier's nephew, at which our friend Brisson was present.

I even believe that recent events will bring out our best qualities and help us to carry out our plans. You have several opponents, but I do not think you have any rivals. Rochefort is very popular, and yet three weeks' steady canvassing would do for him completely, and you would soon become even more popular than he is. The others, including our friend Challemel, are less talented and are less known. So you only have to be prudent ; but therein lies the secret of success : we must do nothing by force. I am ready to write as many letters as you wish to Braleret and Carpentier ; but you need

not worry about them—the difficulty lies elsewhere. We must assemble the old committee (that is to say if it is possible to do so, and we must ask Braleret and Cartigny about the matter), introduce you in person to them, and say straight out that you want the Radical-Democrats to vote for you, and that you ask to be interrogated and examined by any constituents who share similar opinions to your own.

The important thing is to ascertain when you ought to take this final step. I am too far away to settle such a delicate question. Please send my letter to Braleret and beg him from me to make inquiries and to let me know what he hears. I will then reply immediately.

It goes without saying that the choice of the committee is all-important, and that we must be quite sure of the opinions of each and all of its members. Just at present I can only say that, next to Braleret, his friend Cartigny is the man who can give you the best advice.

When once the matter is settled you must put yourself in touch with the different groups of the division and give yourself up to the task of preparing for the elections. I believe (and I have a pretty good idea) that there will be partial elections at the end of November, which, however, in my opinion, would not exclude general dissolution in the near future; but between this and then they will want to sound the remaining deputies, wipe out the past, vote the Budget and the quota for 1870, then turn over a new leaf, and try to form a parliamentary Chamber under a more liberal Empire.

The Paris elections will, so to speak, help us to see

how matters stand, and that is why we ought, instead of devoting our energies to a programme, to content ourselves with promulgating the scission and the struggle between Republic and Empire. However, I do not like empty promises; but whatever chances you may have, I will never back any other candidate but yourself; only you must let me be free to think as I like. You may contradict me as much as you like; you know very well that I am only reasonably obstinate.

I do not send you any letters for Braleret and Carpentier, who are really devoted to you, because it seems unnecessary; you can, however, show them this if you think it as well to do so. You must prepare the way for your success so that when I begin openly to back you up, it may look as if I were acting in accordance with the people's wishes and not because you are my friend.

However, I think that you will approve of what I say here, and so I will add no more. And now I beg you to come and see me as soon as possible, for you will probably be obliged to return to Paris earlier than usual this year in order to keep an eye on the movements of your partisans and adversaries. Besides, it is the proper season to visit this spot, where we are very comfortable. The scenery is beautiful; the position is full south; the people are nice; there is no noise; it is, in fact, quite a miniature Chartreuse on the banks of the Lake of Geneva, with the Pennine Alps in the background. If you do not come after that, it will show that Plutus and politics have got a very tight hold of you.

And what about Jérôme's speech? . . . I think it very serious! . . . But it is easier to talk than to write. . . . Come, you shall talk and I will listen; for these are our

new orders, to keep quiet and not to grumble. *Tuus tibi toto corde.*

MONTREUX, SWITZERLAND.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I was waiting to write to you and to send you news of myself and my new address until I had put my foot for the last time out of a railway carriage.

I left Ems on the morning of August 15th, and I took nearly twelve days to travel 250 leagues, for I was constantly obliged to break my journey after two hours of railway travel, so worn out with heat and fatigue was I. I arrived at last, and I shall now be able to rest and patiently to await the curative effects of the German waters. I am also to take the grape-cure on the banks of the Lake of Geneva. The doctors here all agree with the wise women that I shall make a miraculous cure. I gladly resign myself to waiting, for I feel much better; my cough, which only returns at very long intervals, is less violent and less painful. My nights are good; it is my stomach which is worrying me, for I have lost my appetite again. What I really need is to regain my strength; I have no muscles, and my poor skin looks much too big for what remains of my flesh. But the good Fieuzal, who came to stay with me, and who left everything to accompany me on this painful journey, seems quite reassured, and very pleased with my condition. He is going back to Paris again in two or three days, as soon as Laurier, whom I am now expecting, comes to join me. I will add, so that you may know exactly where I am, that I am right at the end of the Lake of Geneva, between Villeneuve and Montreux, at the foot of the Alps, whose peaks, covered with eternal snow, I salute every morning; and then, when the even-

ing sun gilds them with its last ray, I go to bed. I no longer look at my watch ; I have quarrelled with all the clocks ; the Alps, with the sun as a dial, serve me as timepiece. The air is as soft as in spring at Sorrento, the grapes are ripening and I am already beginning to nibble at them ; I will let you know the result. I do not want to finish my letter without thanking you from the bottom of my heart for the kind messages which you sent me concerning my manifesto. You know how I value your opinion both as a man and as a father. Your approbation fortifies and encourages me, and I treasure it passionately. I hope very much, if I am quite well by November, to deserve more of your approbation, which always does me so much good.

I do not know where mama is just now ; I would write to her if I knew her address. Is she going to join you or is she going to Paris ? I should like to know for certain, and I count upon you. . . .

My address is : M. Gambetta, poste restante, Montreux, Canton de Vaud (Switzerland).

LÉON GAMBETTA.

To Clément Laurier.

MONTREUX, September 29, 1869.

You really are a lucky fellow, and I think that you may consider yourself sure to succeed. I can hardly believe my eyes. I read your letter ten times. How can we account for this unexpected event ? We must hasten to publish Rochefort's kind letter and to further your interests.

I enclose letters for Braleret and Lafont ; but I should like to get some good news, to know that the old committee has met together again, and that you have been

chosen as its candidate. This cannot fail to happen if you have plenty of private interviews, and especially if you give a public conference. I know that the latter experiment is as useful as it is necessary, so you must hasten to organise a public meeting.

The weather is really beautiful here. I am a little better. The last crisis seems to have produced excellent results. So as soon as your affairs are settled you ought to come and bask for a week in the sun. We could then go back together.

À propos of your speech at Lausanne, have you read Montalembert's rectification? Did you reply to it? It seems to me that the version given by the *Rappel* (which is far the best) did not contain the sentence in question. *Quid?*

Write to me. What do they say in Paris? Is every one tumbling into Kératry's trap? You must go to the office of the *Temps* about four o'clock if you want to find J. Lafont. I have not got his address.

October 1, 1869.

MY DEAR MAMA,—It is to you that I want to address the reply which I owe my father for his last letter, dated September 18th. I am quite able to calm your anxiety concerning my health; I feel that I am getting stronger every day; I am really astonished at myself. My cough has nearly gone; it only returns two or three times a week, and is much less severe. My circulation is normal, and I no longer have to burrow under my blankets in order to get a little warmth into my body. I have a good appetite—perhaps too much so; the doctors recommend me to exercise moderation on that pleasing subject. For I must tell you the truth: the bronchitis has nearly dis-

appeared, but the stomachic affection from which I had already suffered has returned, and has weakened me somewhat. But I am resigned. I bear my malady patiently, first, because it is not dangerous, and secondly, because it shows that my lungs are quite sound. I am rather abstemious at table, which, however, does not prevent my digestion from being very unsatisfactory. It will be a long time before I am quite well again. It is very inconvenient both for myself and for others; but I know my fate, and the principal thing is that this complaint will not prevent me fulfilling my duty. Ah! I long to re-enter the lists and to do something decisive. For six whole months I have been idling and dosing myself. This condition is neither living nor dying, and is enough to disgust one with oneself.

I expect to get back to Paris for the reopening of the Chamber, but you must say nothing about it; for if I could not do so, I should be very vexed to think that my return had been announced. When I am settled in my new apartment I shall collect my thoughts, make up my accounts, and put everything in order; and after having done my duty to the Chamber, I shall try to come and embrace you in Nice and repay my father for what he sent me.

I am very glad to know that you are able to rest, and pleased with your new home. . . .

To Clément Laurier.

MONTEUX, October 12, 1869.

I am writing to you for the last time before returning to Paris. I expect to start to-morrow, Wednesday, or Thursday at the latest, and to arrive Saturday night

I cannot remain here any longer ; besides, I want to be present at the meetings announced to take place by Ferry in the *Siècle*. It is high time to force the Left to form itself into a Government according to the wishes of the public. This is one of their chief grievances against us (for I do not attempt to shield myself from this well-deserved blame). So far we have been unable to seize the helm of public opinion and keep it ; we read this latent and very just reproach in the eyes of all around us. The country, well aware that the present Government is at the last gasp, is looking for a guide, and finds nothing. The third party, the Left and the Left Centre, seem equally unfit to command and to obey. This state of anarchy must cease or something very serious may happen. The Left must make up its mind between this and October 26th to seize the helm. The Left must appear as our future master, reassuring and ready to cope with the present and the past.

This thought has been occupying my mind ever since the month of July. I mentioned it in my manifesto of July 27th, and I shall work it out on my return, strengthened by the energy and new force which such emergencies always give me.

Yesterday morning I sent Lavertujon, at his address in Paris, 8, rue Halévy, a work in the shape of a reply to the announcement that Kératry was going to throw up his candidature. *I commissioned him to take it to you*, so that you could talk it over together, see if it would be useful and if it is well done. It goes without saying that you may show it to our own friends, Challemel, Henry, and Brisson. You know that I only claim to satisfy our daily needs and the wishes of the public. For the rest I care nothing, so you may do as you please.

I will say no more to-day. However, I cannot close my letter without assuring you that I have great hopes of your ultimate success. I received a long letter from Braleret yesterday, full of very promising details. I can tell you by experience that Braleret is not usually an optimist, although he may seem very reassuring at times. He bestirs himself to much effect; he is clear-sighted and one can trust in his judgment.

I am equally delighted with Lafont; I fully expected he would act as he has done. Come! everything is going on well and Rochefort seems losing ground. The report that he is going to withdraw his candidature is public property, and I have just read an article in the *Gaulois* which is very hard on him; but we have not done with him yet.

I know perfectly well that you never reply immediately to a letter; but I beg you to let me know why Quentin has not answered my letter and why he has inserted nothing. You can send me one word on this subject addressed to Mme. Laurier, *poste restante*, Dijon; for you can understand why I am travelling incognito through Magnin's town. He wrote to me to-day inviting me to stay with him; but I shall do nothing of the sort. . . .

Wednesday, October 13, 1869.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Just two words in haste to tell you that I am going back to Paris. I am starting in an hour's time; but I am obliged to break the journey three times in order not to tire myself too much. So I shall not arrive before Saturday. I long to be back again, for things are in a bad way. I did not write to you before because I was overwhelmed with letters and work. Send me news of yourselves so that I may find a letter

from you on my return to Paris (12, rue Montaigne).
I kiss you on both cheeks. LÉON GAMBETTA.

November 12, 1869.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I got back to Paris last Sunday. I found my aunt and my sister already installed; they had waited twelve hours for me. Our meeting was both sad and delightful. They reminded me of my absent ones, and that made me sad; but they also comforted me greatly, and so I soon felt quite happy again.

All our friends have already been to see us.

I cannot describe to you the kind and fatherly reception which M. and Mme. Crémieux accorded to me; it was enough to make one weep for joy; if I had been their own son, they could not have made more fuss over me. However, matters are strained among the members of the cabinet; I will write and tell you all about it when I have ascertained the cause.

Meanwhile rely upon me: be assured that the coming year shall not only be a year of hard work but a decisive year for me. I must put the finishing touches to my task and so enable you to nurse your cramp and your back.

Kiss my kind mama for me and for your daughter, and believe me your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, January 1, 1870.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I need hardly wish you a happy new year, for you have already got your wish: a nice shelter for your old age in a delightful country on the very threshold of your native land, with robust health

and the knowledge that you will be able during long years to enjoy all these good things, the fruits of honesty and hard work. All is well and will go on well, and, thanks be to Heaven, all will continue and increase.

As for me, I too am hopeful; I shall soon make up for lost time if my strength continues to return. Meanwhile I am beginning to weary of this long inactivity and I feel the need of breaking silence soon. I am in training. . . .

PARIS, *March 17, 1870.*

MY DEAR KIND FATHER,—This year I feel particularly glad to be able to wish you a happy birthday. It is, in fact, the first time that I have been able to send you my dutiful wishes since your heart's desire has been realised. So now you can enjoy the repose so richly deserved by a life of hard work and devotion to duty. Although you are still youthful and strong, you have earned, by your thrift, the right to enjoy many years of sweet retirement. I am sure that you will enjoy this existence for many years; for you have all the qualities and resources of good health and moderation which one needs to make such a life really enjoyable.

I wish very much that I could come to you and share for a few weeks the pleasures of your fireside and your retirement from business; but time is short and I must remain at my post: I resign myself to wait, and meanwhile I am glad to think that all your wishes are realised, that mama will return to you in a few days, and that, together or apart, our hearts will always be inseparable.

Gambetta's *début*, which had been anxiously awaited by the Chamber, surpassed even his friends' highest

expectations. The young deputy for Marseilles, whose impetuosity and violence had aroused some fears in the minds of his well-wishers, was, however, quite on his best behaviour. His adversaries themselves in their enthusiasm even forgot the doctrines which he was not afraid to defend, and applauded him spontaneously without realising that he was hitting straight home.

Let us now hear what several eye-witnesses of this triumphant *début* have to say on the matter.

Cauvière wrote in *La France*, April 6, 1870.

"This was M. Gambetta's real *début*, and, far from disappointing the brilliant hopes which his friends had founded on his youthful reputation, he rose in one bound to the highest pinnacles of parliamentary eloquence. M. Gambetta's speech lasted no less than two hours; the opinions expressed by him, the doctrines which he defended, were certainly not shared by the majority of his audience; and yet the Chamber did not relax its attention for one single moment. On the contrary, during the interval which followed the first part of his speech, representatives from the Right and the Left parties assured M. Gambetta of their friendship and wished him success. . . .

"People said: 'Don't forget that the neo-Republican party has found in M. Gambetta something better than a first-rate orator. He will be their statesman, their master!'

"It is perhaps rather uncharitable to make the following remark, but the half-hearted applause with which certain members of the Left greeted Gambetta's speech tempt us to believe that they were not very far out in their conjectures.

"M. Gambetta's weak spot is his bad health. He has

all the qualities necessary to make a great orator—everything, except good lungs. Yesterday, after his magnificent burst of eloquence called forth by M. Guizot's speech on the *suffrage universel*, he bent over the edge of the rostrum exhausted, speechless, breathless. 'Rest yourself! rest yourself!' was heard on all sides. M. Gambetta made a sign that he was in real need of a few minutes' rest. He went and sat down in the passage to the right of the rostrum, where he was immediately joined by a great number of deputies. . . .

"Ten minutes later he was able to continue his speech without showing the slightest trace of fatigue.

"M. Gambetta, like all Southerners, accentuates his speech with numerous gestures. Carried away by enthusiasm for his subject, he forgot that a glass of coffee had been placed on the edge of the rostrum and overturned it on the head of a reporter, who only had time to fly down one of the passages and wipe his streaming face.

"On any other occasion this mishap would have provoked fits of laughter. The audience was so completely under the spell of the eloquence of the deputy for Marseilles that very few of the deputies remarked the incident. And this fact in itself was another feather in his cap!"

"The great event of the day," remarked the *Figaro* of April 7th, "was the *séance* of the *Corps législatif*. France now possesses another great orator—M. Gambetta. He occupied the rostrum for nearly two hours; and when he descended, every one cried that he alone was worthy to succeed to Mirabeau, Royer-Collard, and Berryer."

The *Journal de Paris* gave its impression in these

words : "M. Jérôme David was followed by M. Gambetta. For one and a half hours he held the *Assemblée* spell-bound. His speech was incontestably the most beautiful, the most brilliant, the most eloquent, and the most politic discourse which we have heard for a long time. . . . The Left applauded him, and the whole *Assemblée* listened in absolute silence. Many deputies from the Right and the Right Centre crowded into the passages in order to congratulate the young deputy for Marseilles on his brilliant success. Some even went the length of expressing their regret that their political opinions did not allow them to join in the applause of the Left."

The *Temps* exclaims in its enthusiasm—

"Happy are they who assisted at yesterday's *séance*! They witnessed an extraordinary scene, and they heard one of the most magnificent speeches which has been uttered in the rostrum for a long time. . . .

"This splendid speech was not made by M. Jérôme David but by M. Gambetta. And it was an extraordinary sight to see a young man, a new-comer to the *Assemblée* of the Empire, for two hours methodically and analytically proceed to demonstrate the superiority of a republican government, the unlawfulness of any other *régime*, the fact that a change would and must come, and make people who at ordinary times would nearly go off their heads at the mere mention of a Republic, listen to him whom no one dared interrupt even when he uttered the most audacious opinions, and for whom his adversaries only had kind words and benevolent smiles.

"This is what we saw yesterday, and to-day we can hardly believe that we did not dream it all. . . ."

Nefftzer, in the same newspaper, put the finishing

touch to the applause accorded to his young friend:—"Yesterday," said he, "will not have been useless since it will have revealed the oratorical and political talents of M. Gambetta. The young deputy for Marseilles yesterday justified in a striking manner the hopes and confidence which his constituents and friends had placed in him. He proved himself to be a first-rate political orator, no less clever than powerful, for he made an unsympathising assembly listen and applaud him."

At the same time, the young tribune of the rising party, the victorious defender of Delescluze, received numerous calls to come to the aid of France, wherever the Government was trying to clip the young Republic's wings.

Armand Duportal, principal editor of the *Emancipation*, wrote to him from Toulouse, May 12th:—

MY DEAR GAMBETTA,—You know that I have been sentenced to six months' imprisonment and to pay a fine of five thousand francs. I intend to lodge an appeal. Will your health and your occupations as a deputy allow you to come and plead for me in court?

I need not tell you how much I should like you to do so; I beg you to consult your own feelings, and if you don't feel justified in doing this for me, let me know at once, so that I may act accordingly. You will delight our friends at Toulouse, and every Southerner who has any sympathy for our cause will flock to hear you.

But if I must renounce your valuable assistance, could you not help me to gain time by going yourself to see Clément Laurier for me, and by begging him to come and defend the *Emancipation* in court? We must not lose any time; for the delay for lodging an appeal expires

the day after to-morrow, and you know that our attorney-general is so tremendously busy that he only allows one the delay prescribed by the law of 1868.

Let me hope that you will send a prompt and satisfactory reply to the wish expressed at the beginning of my letter.

Your very devoted,

ARMAND DUPORTAL.

However, Gambetta's health was so seriously affected that he was obliged to decline these offers, and even to fly from the inevitable crush of business which he had to face in Paris, and to hide himself in some out-of-the-way corner.

To Clément Laurier.

LILLE, June 15, 1870.

I am very comfortable here, isolated, and grazing peacefully. I think that if I follow this *régime* for three weeks I shall be able to take the waters somewhere; for I have made up my mind to get quite well again before I resume my task.

Do you appear in the conspiracy case, and when will it come on? I strongly advise you to take part in it; but choose your brief very carefully, for you can do so. The legislative elections are drawing nigh, and, as I told you, the general elections will begin in the month of April, 1871. We must be prepared. How about the *conseil général* of le Var? I have not seen the results yet. We must keep an eye on that division as well as on that of Aix. You must be sure to win fresh laurels for yourself by playing a prominent part in the conspiracy case. How are your people? Are they all in good health? I feel better already and I am very hopeful, which is a sign that I am getting well. . . .

PS.—In order to conceal my identity you must address my letters to M. Gustave Masure, *au Progrès du Nord*, to be forwarded to M. Massabie, Lille. Masure will bring them to me and save me all trouble.

*To Gustave Masure.**

August, 1870.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have been obliged to leave Paris in order to save all that remained of my voice and to rest in absolute silence. I have given my address to *nobody*, so that I may not be disturbed. I have even taken the name of Massabie, my mother's maiden name, so that I may not be subjected to continual annoyance on the journey. All this is very well for a time, but I have to write some important letters and to receive several replies without, however, revealing my whereabouts.

So I thought that you might help me to conceal my identity. I am supposed to be staying under the name of Massabie at a country house near Lille in order to rest myself; I am said to receive and despatch my letters under your name. So, here is my first sheaf of letters, which kindly stamp and post for me at Lille. I shall tell my friends to address their replies to M. Gustave

* Gustave Masure, a journalist, a native of Lille, founded under the Empire the *Progrès du Nord*, which he was at first obliged to publish in Brussels owing to the republican opinions expressed in this newspaper. In the numerous political lawsuits which followed the publication of the *Progrès du Nord* Ernest Picard, counsel for Gustave Masure, one day asked Gambetta to take his place. The two men became great friends, and during the Baudin affair, Gambetta pleaded for Masure at Lille. During the war Masure, who was then a *conseiller municipal* at Lille, was summoned by Gambetta to the Ministry of the Interior (office of the staff). He later became deputy for Lille (1876–1885), and died in 1886.

Masure, to be forwarded to Massabie. I beg your pardon a thousand times for giving you all this trouble, but you are too kind to refuse me this favour. I hope to come to Lille to thank you in person. Until then, I ask you to say nothing, and I beg you to believe me ever your sincere and devoted

LÉON GAMBETTA.

BRUSSELS, HÔTEL DE LA POSTE.

PS.—I shall probably weigh anchor and go and stay somewhere in the depths of the country. I will let you know my new address.

V

GAMBETTA AND THE NATIONAL DEFENCE

WE now begin the public life of Gambetta: every hour, every minute of rest becomes rarer; one might almost think that the Dictator of the National Defence, who had been suddenly made Minister of the Interior and head of the War Office, had been forbidden to take any rest.

He seems to have forgotten his family in the midst of France's misfortunes. Gambetta's whole heart, whole mind is expressed in his public life, in the grave decisions which he has to take when face to face with his fatherland's terrible reverses.

The official documents issued during his term of office show all the depth of feeling and the genius of him who was the very soul of the nation's resistance against the invaders' haughty injunctions.

Every page, every line of Léon Gambetta's letters and private despatches vibrates with his love for France and a mad desire to sacrifice everything rather than see his fatherland perish—everything, even the young Republic, for which its greatest, its most disinterested founder would, however, have given his life. The fatherland and the Republic were so inseparable in his mind and in his heart, and seemed so thoroughly knit together,

that he considered that every loyal servitor of France deserved to be trusted by the Government.

The possibility of any treachery, the fear only too natural to a politician lest any disloyal adversary should betray his confidence, never troubled the proud patriot. He would not admit that a Frenchman who had hitherto shown himself brave and loyal could be otherwise when facing the enemy. Though people might excuse cowardice, he considered it the most despicable of all crimes. The man who, with righteous indignation, had refused to believe the first rumour that Metz had capitulated, did not hesitate to confide the command of the Armée de la Loire to General d'Aurelles de Paladines, whom he had but lately deprived of his command at Marseilles for having refused to recognise the Republic and to obey the Provisional Government.

In the hour of France's dire misfortunes this young advocate, who was then only thirty-two years of age, suddenly revealed remarkable talent for organisation. By his extraordinary eloquence, by riding triumphant over all obstacles, Gambetta electrified the nation and, by his wonderful and happy knack of knowing exactly when to take the initiative, became the very incarnation of the National Defence. It was as if, at the sound of his wonderful voice, twelve bodies of troops, six hundred thousand men, fifteen hundred thousand guns and fourteen hundred cannons had sprung from the soil of France, prepared to defend the fatherland.

Among Esquiros' papers was found an account of the installation of the new Minister of the Interior who had arisen from the ruins of the Imperial *régime*: nothing more poignant or more sublimely simple characterised the events of the Revolution.

"On the very night of September 4th," wrote Esquiros, "I received these few words from Gambetta: 'My dear Esquiros, come; we need your help.'

"The *hôtel* of the Minister of the Interior was guarded by a few blouse-clad volunteers. No lights were to be seen in any of the windows of the block of buildings situated in a dark, deserted court at the end of a long avenue. One solitary lamp burned before a big glass door. This door led by a stone staircase to the Minister's study.

"Gambetta was seated before a table covered with papers; he was writing out some despatches by the light of a lamp. Notwithstanding his delight at having won the day, he seemed grave and anxious. The interview was very brief; he assured me that my presence was necessary at Marseilles, and proposed to send me there immediately as Governor-General. I asked to be allowed to have twenty-four hours in which to think over his proposal, and then I departed. While crossing the courtyard of the *hôtel*, I met a hand-cart containing a trunk and a carpet-bag: this was the luggage of the new Minister who had come to take up his abode within these silent walls."

The very first thing which Gambetta had to do was to organise everything and to provide against all emergencies: there was nothing left: everything had been swallowed up in the disaster: "We are short of everything—artillery, ammunition, officers, information," wrote Bourbaki; "patriotism is the only thing we do not lack."

MacMahon's army had been taken prisoner; Bazaine, at that time invested in Metz, was about to capitulate; the siege of Paris was to begin on September 19th and to end with the surrender of the capital.

The Republic only had a few battalions at its disposal ; these battalions had been lately assembled by General Cambriels together with some Breton *gardes mobiles* and an incomplete division which had been despatched from Algeria to Bourges, where General de La Motterouge took command.

Organisation was just as lacking in civil as in military affairs. On September 28th Admiral Fourichon was to complicate matters still more by giving in his resignation because he would not acknowledge the revolutionists' right to nominate commissioners and the supremacy of civil power.

On becoming Minister of the Interior, Gambetta also became head of the War Office. He had absolute power over everything. To him fell the grand but fatiguing task of pacifying all parties ; he had to repel the invader, or at least try to wrest some of his prizes from him, curb the reaction against the new *régime*, utilise all offers of assistance, encourage the faint-hearted, and finally inspire officials and soldiers with that patriotic ardour which had never ceased to fill the heart of the great orator and which enabled him proudly to swear—

“ Never has despair dared to look me in the face ! ”

Gambetta's private letters and telegrams tell us with what superhuman energy he struggled and fought for his country's good. By turns head of the State, soldier, intendant, and commissary, he dictated or wrote with his own hand his multifarious commands ; we know how he sent daily messages to all his prefects so that France might be kept constantly advised as to the enemy's progress. These papers have been published. His friends and biographers all admire and praise the proud trust and confidence which, even in the midst of the

most terrible reverses, could still hold out hope to the nation which refused to die, although for one instant it had doubted his ability to rescue it from ruin. His adversaries considered that the confidence of this man, whom they could not help admiring even while they called him "the raving lunatic," was exaggerated to such an extent that it amounted to deceit.

"M. Gambetta, who was the arbitrary master of France's destiny during the three months that his dictatorship lasted," wrote one of his detractors, M. Georges d'Heylli, in February, 1871, "was able, without any one daring to oppose his conduct, to misemploy his power in order to unsettle the country and satisfy his own ambitions; but we must say in his defence that he did this with the patriotic intention of freeing the country from the invading barbarians.

"M. Gambetta considered that it did not matter what he did provided that he could obtain the object of his desire. By trampling his country's laws under foot, by slighting the most elementary rules of civilised society, by hunting from their benches *magistrats inamovibles*,* and from the council-chambers those who had been elected by suffrage, by taking the war into his own hands, by promoting and depriving officers of their rank, by suddenly changing, according to his own whims and fancies or those of his advisers, his opinions, schemes, and plans, by discussing the most different and dissimilar subjects, M. Gambetta has spent in the service of his indefatigable energy all the resources of the most active but at the same time the most unruly mind which ever was. This *parvenu* advocate, who possessed in a super-

* *Magistrats inamovibles*: judges who cannot be deprived of their position.

lative degree a florid and persuasive gift of eloquence, travelled all over France in the train of his armies, the work of his own enthusiasm, wishing to do everything by himself, and presumptuous enough to believe that his talents were such that he could occupy simultaneously the rôles of orator, organiser, general, and head of the State. . . .

“ Well, notwithstanding all these imperfections, and in spite of ourselves, so to speak, this vulgar, unruly, violent person, endowed at the same time with the greatest qualities which go to make a statesman and spoilt by the greatest vices which make such a person imperfect, *this man attracts us* ; he is rather a favourite than otherwise with the populace ; his really irresistible and passionate eloquence sways the public ; the people blame him for his mistakes, but they applaud his patriotism. The people, who, in short, represent power and the great majority of the nation, admired this man who, by his own efforts, had aroused and armed the whole country and enabled our provinces, during three whole months, to resist the invader. So, while blaming the extravagant measures employed by him, the people, with their usual good sense, understood that the object which he had in view was the greatest, the most noble which a citizen could desire ; and notwithstanding his faults, notwithstanding his downfall, the people, on several occasions, chose, to defend their interests, him who, in the midst of our misfortunes and his own follies, never despaired of the resources and the salvation of his fatherland.”

When we remember that the above lines were penned by an historian who was hostile to Gambetta on the morrow of his assumption of the rôle of *Dictator*, we

can easily understand what a tremendous influence he exercised over France, and what wonders he might have accomplished by the sole power of his confidence in the nation, had it not been for the cunning jealousy of those who ought to have imitated his example and thus helped the fatherland to surmount its troubles.

Michel Chevalier—another of the tribune's antagonists, who compared him to Danton, and even considered him the latter's superior—wrote, February 15, 1871, in an article in which he tried to excuse himself for admiring the tribune whom he wished to hate:—

“The enthusiasts have now found an energetic and audacious leader, surrounded with numerous and zealous partisans; that leader is M. Gambetta. It was not very difficult to foresee, after the events of September 4th, that he would be persuaded to accept this rôle. People affirm that Mazzini has compromised him by approving his conduct, and it is an indisputable fact that he has become the patron saint of the red flag. The demagogues treat him as their spoiled child. His breach with the *Girondins* of the Provisional Government is now an accomplished fact, the consequences of which are making themselves felt. The *Assemblée nationale*, which is about to convene, will be the scene of a battle on the very first day.

“We should be strangely blind if we did not see that the situation is a perilous one. M. Gambetta is in many ways a formidable champion. We have every cause to dread him on account of his eloquence, which goes straight to the heart of the masses and is certainly increased by practice and opposition. We also have reason to dread him on account of his self-conceit, which he himself takes very naïvely, and which the people

complacently believe to be genius, and in which he has boundless confidence. His imperious disposition, which pleases what Paul-Louis Courier called 'the *esprit courti-sanesque* of the French nation,' is also to be dreaded, as is the influence exercised by him over the clubs, the municipal authorities whom the Provisional Government has allowed to be corrupted, the national guards stationed in the chief towns of France, and a portion of the Press which is by no means the least read. . . ."

It is interesting to compare, after thirty-six years of peace, this animosity—too passionate not to be factitious—with the proud serenity of the great patriot after the first shock caused by the news of our defeat, and especially the perfidious and envious hatred of some of his political friends as revealed by Gambetta in some of those proud, sad letters which are still treasured by his family.

In his private correspondence with his father, his confidant during the whole of his public and private life, we can feel his intrepid soul vibrating and soaring far above all his trials. Six months of terrible struggles had exhausted his strength, but could not lessen his confidence in the future of France, the France which he was to serve with all his heart and soul until the day of his death.

And yet what anguish he suffered during those horrible six months of responsibility and fatigue, the heaviest load which ever pressed the shoulders of the chief of a nation! . . .

One of his interlocutors of those days lately told me that Gambetta had said to him on the eve of the capitulation of Metz, which he feared and dreaded:—

“Metz! Metz! I can think of nothing but Metz! . . . And yet it might be our salvation. But what will Bazaine do? The Government of the National Defence blundered over his case. I proposed to include him among the members of the Government. No one could object to such a step: on the contrary; for, by winning him over to our side, we should have made him responsible. I found that Jules Favre, and Trochu in especial, were opposed to my plan. So I had to yield; but I repeat, it was a mistake. What is Bazaine going to do?”

And every hour brought fresh anguish, fresh anxieties which had to be hidden from every one and to be allayed as soon as possible. Ah! Gambetta was really grand in those tragic moments. One of his most clear-sighted enemies, General Colmar von der Goltz, solemnly acknowledged this fact.

“Gambetta,” wrote he, “was a great Minister of War. In France he was nicknamed *the Carnot of the Defeat*. . . . And yet he proved himself to be a worthy successor to Carnot. His armies would have conquered if they had had a Bonaparte at their head, and if they had had to fight against the generals of the coalition of 1814. The attacks or the suspicions with which Gambetta’s personal honour was sometimes assailed are beneath our notice. In this respect he only shared the fate of all great people, all heroes who have fallen from their high estate. Pigmies love to trample on the fallen giant, and thus revenge themselves for the fact that they stand no higher than the soles of his boots. They who were able to read this man’s character in his benevolent features will say that he was not likely to line his pockets with gold taken from the sinking ship,

his fatherland. Gambetta ought to have been content with his position as head of the War Office; and yet his conduct as a general was, in many respects, worthy of praise. The fundamental plan of action, his schemes, his preparations, show not only great daringness but a good knowledge of strategy. This knowledge was manifested in his endeavours to send the first division of the Armée de la Loire to Fontainebleau *via* Montargis; it was no less remarkable in the astonishing wheeling which was accomplished after the second defeat at Orléans while two new corps were being formed from the first Armée de la Loire. . . .

“Few men appreciate Gambetta as he has always deserved to be appreciated. The Germans have ever treated him with more justice than his own compatriots; and it ill befits us, who are on the winning side, to speak badly of his person. We do justice to his great qualities; they are undeniable, although his personality taken as a whole was not perfect.

“He did what few men had done before him; and few men after him will ever attain to such heights of grandeur. When we feel obliged to say that he was narrow-minded, we only use this term relatively, while judging the Dictator with the same standard which he had set up for himself on assuming this colossal task. He who would carry the world on his shoulders must have the strength of an Atlas, or else the crowd will treat him like a pigmy.

“Gambetta is head and shoulders above the generality of men.”

And yet these words were uttered by the enemies whom he had exasperated by his resistance, and who, on account of his brave conduct, had feared for a moment

that they would be exterminated far away from their fatherland. Other men, Frenchmen, in the name of some low political spite, deny that he ever possessed courage. The episode of the balloon in which he crossed the Prussian lines would suffice to prove the contrary. And here is the evidence of a man who, however, did not share his opinions. The Marquis de Castellane wrote:—

“Is it true that Gambetta, while the whole country was fighting, prudently remained hidden in the *préfecture* of Tours out of the way of any stray bullets? It matters little whether this man was more or less brave. His patriotism, I must confess, was his most remarkable quality, and he knew how to be brave when it was necessary to be so. I happened to be upon guard at the railway-station of Beaugency on December 4, 1870. When night had fallen, I saw the engine steam into the station bearing the young Dictator. The locomotive looked like some great animal which had been torn and mangled by dogs; it was literally riddled by the Germans' bullets. Gambetta had remained at his post until the last minute that he might be able to organise plans for saving all that remained of the Armée d'Orléans.”

And then war, with its bloody butchery and its even more murderous epidemics, did not spare his own family. Jouinot, his sister Benedetta's young husband, a lieutenant in the *garde mobile*, died during the siege of Paris. Her son, Léon, the tribune's nephew and godson, had just been born; here is the letter which the Minister, overwhelmed with grief and anxiety, wrote to his sister in order to try and assuage her sorrow:—

Ministère de l'Intérieur.
Cabinet du Ministre.

BORDEAUX, *January 8, 1871.*

MY DEAR CHILD, MY GOOD SISTER,—You have to-day learnt the terrible news which I must now confirm. Our poor Gabriel has died of the epidemic, that cursed small-pox, which has been devastating Paris for the past year. Your courage is only equalled by your love for your dear, unhappy Gabriel. You know how I loved him and how I tried to make life easy for him. Fate has not willed that he should survive France's misfortunes or that I should give him a position more worthy of his talents. But, in our common affliction, one memory, one consolation, one duty remains to both of us: I mean your adorable little Léon, whom I consider as my own son. I will do everything I can to ease your sorrow, and you know me too well not to confide completely in me.

I, together with those who love you, will guard and guide both you and him. I know that time alone can lessen your grief; but I do not want you to grieve without me, without your brother who loves you, embraces you, and will protect you now and always, both when he is absent and when he is with you.

I send you many kisses and exhort you to be brave. Kiss our dear little one and rely upon your brother.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

The tribune, having at last been liberated from his post, bowed to his colleagues' desire to capitulate and resigned his position with proud serenity: he knew that he had done his duty, and even much more than his duty. His adversaries' attacks left him indifferent: he waited patiently for history to do justice to him.

BORDEAUX, *February 19, 1871.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I received your kind, firm letter and, as ever, I find that your judgment is faultless. You are perfectly right about our political position and mine in particular. Just at present I can only think of one thing: I want, after all our vain efforts to drive the foreigner from our territory, at least to save our Republican institutions.

But France is very depressed; the mind of the nation is very troubled, very cloudy; Paris itself seems to have lost the faculty for taking the initiative, and we shall have to endure many trials before we can regain peace and liberty. No matter: I shall go on my way as heretofore; I shall ever be the servitor who knows that the French Revolution was caused by a longing for justice; and no matter what men may say, I shall obey the dictates of my conscience.

My health has been somewhat tried by these ups and downs; but it is my mental health, even more than my physical strength, which has suffered. A little care will soon set me on my feet again. But when shall I be able to come and spend a few days with you? I know not and I cannot guess, for my time belongs to me even less than ever. I owe myself to all our political friends who ask me to keep in constant communication with them. But as soon as I see a chance to escape, I will come and embrace you.

I have seen Marc Dufraisse, who gave me good news of you all. Continue to take care of yourself without worrying about me, and believe me ever your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

No. 41, Cours du XXX Juillet, Bordeaux.

SAINT-SEBASTIEN, SPAIN, *March* 18, 1871.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Notwithstanding my own overwhelming sorrows and our opponents' ever-increasing acts of injustice, I do not want you to fancy that I do not think of you. I should have come in person to wish you a happy birthday and to embrace you if I had been obliged, for political reasons, to pass through Marseilles.

I have had to postpone my departure until the beginning of April: by that time I shall feel stronger and sufficiently calm to forget my enemies and their machinations and to come and spend a few days with my family without any other thought except to bask in your affection. I know so well that I always recover my health when I am with you, and that in a visit to my home I always find a sovereign remedy for all my ills.

Until then, I beg you to keep well and happy, and to take great care of my little constituent,* with whom I long to prattle at length. Kiss his mother for me and tell her that she belongs to both of us. I do not expect to return to Paris before Easter. I do not know when the re-elections will take place, and really I am not very keen to see them come about and to be obliged to meet that ignorant and cowardly Assembly which could only cringe and bow to the conqueror's injunctions.

But there I go, beginning to think about politics again, which I have been expressly forbidden to do. I will stop here and beg you to accept my wishes that you may spend many happy years on your favourite seashore.

* The little Léon Jouinot, his sister's child.

Kiss mama on both cheeks for her son and accept all my filial affection.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Emilio Castelar said of him :—

“At the first glance one could see in the huge head, in that broad forehead, in the glitter concentrated in his only remaining eye, in that mouth with its kind smile, in that ruddy countenance, in that short but herculean form, in his whole attitude, a happy mixture of intelligence and power, of lofty ideals mingled with energy and determination. Men of great bodily strength are seldom endowed with great minds. The reflective nature craves retirement; the energetic man prefers society: the former loves peace of mind, the latter enjoys a struggle; the thinker only cares for books; the wrestler loves to tame his foe. . . . Great qualities are usually counterbalanced by great failings. Nature had endowed Gambetta with the rare privileges of a perfectly balanced mind and will; his intelligence and discernment were strictly in harmony with each other.”

VI

THE REPUBLIC OF GAMBETTA

Sunday, March 17, 1872.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Last year cruel fate obliged me to send you my best wishes from the Spanish frontier. In the midst of our national distress, at that blessed period when we are all accustomed to wish you a happy birthday, I turned to you. To-day things seem settling down. Hope reappears on the horizon, and we have every reason to believe that our efforts, so long misunderstood, will soon be better appreciated and that they will not have been altogether unavailing for the honour of France and for the future of the Republic.

So it is with ever-increasing confidence that I send you my best wishes for your happiness in the future. I am feeling more reassured. I beg you to take care of yourself, so that some day you may be able to enjoy our victory, the result of our common task. After having striven, after having done so much for me, it is only right that you should be rewarded by witnessing my success.

I beg my dear sister and my good mother to embrace you on both cheeks and to make my dear little constituent imitate their example. I send you all the assurance of my filial and fraternal devotion; though my busy life

may sometimes oblige me to keep silent, never doubt of the ardent, unchangeable affection which fills the heart of your devoted son.

One more kiss for everybody. Your

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *December 29, 1872.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—You may be quite sure that I am not going to let this unhappy year close without sending you my best love and without expressing my deepest gratitude to you for all the care, all the sacrifices which you made for me during my childhood and my youth, with the help of that good mama whom I am now kissing in imagination.

I had hoped some day or other to come to Nice to embrace you and to pass a few hours with you under the roof which you have just erected. I had spoken about it to my friend, M. Adam; but the cruel goddess who rules over my destiny has ordained otherwise. Politics condemn me to remain on duty in Paris. I cannot leave town. Hour by hour I follow the work with which the President on one side and the Thirty Tyrants on the other side (not to mention our friends the *dissolutionnistes*) are now occupied. I am fairly satisfied and reassured. The monarchists' designs will miscarry. M. Thiers will either end by forcing them to capitulate or else he will dissolve them. Meanwhile he keeps them busy with one hand, while with the other he pays the Prussians, shortens the period of occupation—that is to say, hastens the hour of dissolution, for which, at the bottom of his heart, he longs even more ardently than we do.

The country each day advances a step nearer the Re-

public. Even the most indifferent citizens are rallying; and we have every reason to believe that the great voice of France will make itself heard in May or June, and then everyone will be put in his proper place.

Until then we must be very cautious and work very hard—which does not mean that caution and hard work will not be even more necessary on the morrow of our triumph, but that I cannot leave Paris just at present, and I am obliged, notwithstanding my wishes, to write my new year's letter as heretofore and to send my kisses to mama, my sister, and my dear little Léon by post. Do not forget to give my kindest regards to M. and Mme. Séméria, whom I consider as members of the family.

I wish you a thousand blessings and I remain your
very devoted

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *August 14, 1873.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am sending you, as I promised, the balance of the two thousand francs. I can assure you that I had great trouble to scrape it together, for times are bad, and the older I get, the more I find I have to spend.

In short, I owe myself, heart and fortune, to France and to the Republic. I shall persevere to the end. I much hope that the great nation will not fail in her duty towards herself, and that the Republic, notwithstanding the Royalists' intrigues and deeds of violence, will triumph over all her enemies both at home and abroad.

I embrace you and beg you to kiss all the family and especially the little constituent.

Léon Gambetta's letters to his family now chiefly consist of short notes, brief remarks—too severe to be

reproduced here—upon his contemporaries, several of whom are still alive. Most of these letters show how deeply grateful he was to his own relations; he softened their lot and, little by little, helped them to pay off their old debts. Although he seemed fairly well off, he was in reality far from rich, owing to his disinterested behaviour; however, he managed to save a small sum from his income which was still no larger than that of many a student. When he felt himself getting over-tired, he used to run away from Paris for a few days, accompanied by some intimate friend, and take a pleasure trip, which, however, often became an occasion for study. But he could not always escape the curiosity of a sympathetic public. Ranc relates an incident which occurred during a tour in Flanders.

“One evening while in Amsterdam we entered a *café-concert* out of curiosity. The audience consisted of honest, middle-class folk drinking their beer and quietly smoking their pipes. The concert was quite cosmopolitan, for the singers comprised Flemish, English, German and French *artistes*. In short, it was rather mediocre and uninteresting.

“We were just going away when we remarked that the audience seemed a little excited. Every one was looking our way. The manager of the establishment went to speak to the leader of the band, who made a sign to his musicians, and after a pause we had the pleasure of hearing the first bars of the *Marseillaise*. Gambetta had been recognised.

“A young woman then came on the stage. She wore a black, crape-trimmed dress with a tricolour sash. She began a song with a refrain of which I have often since thought :—

“ La patrouille allemande passe,
 Baissez la voix, mes chers petits;
 Parler français n'est plus permis
 Aux petits enfants de l'Alsace ! ”*

This song was the *Maitre d'Ecole Alsacien* which was sung at the Eldorado after the war by a gifted and impassioned singer, Mme. Amiati. The Amsterdam singer neither had much voice nor much talent, but she sang as if she really meant what she was singing. And then she was in sympathy with her audience. All those phlegmatic Dutchmen were swayed by the same feeling. Each verse was received with loud applause. When we went away, the whole audience rose in a body and took off their hats to Gambetta; every hand was stretched towards him. Holland, in saluting Gambetta, was saluting vanquished France. We did not exchange one single word while we walked home. Our hearts were too heavy. I have seldom felt more moved than I felt that evening.”

PARIS, September 22, 1874.

MY DEAR MOTHER,—I beg you to keep in good health and to take great care of my dear papa's neuralgia. I love to think that he is already on the road to recovery.

As for me, the state of my health leaves nothing to be desired; I have enough and to spare; people might say that the harder I work the stouter I grow. This stoutness, however, worries me, and I think I ought to do some climbing in the mountains in order to reduce

* “ The German patrol is passing by,
 Sing softly, my little one;
 The little children of Alsace
 May no longer speak their mother-tongue ! ”

it. But I am on duty here for a long time still ; I can see no chance of making my escape.

I am patient in this as in many other things, for I learnt long ago that patience is the best remedy for all the ills to which mankind is heir.

Keep happy ; I embrace you both with all my heart.

Your son, LÉON GAMBETTA.

To Gustave Masure.

PARIS, November 3, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have asked M. Marchand to send you two new volumes which he has just devoted to the history of the Jesuits—M. Marchand, whose studies in philosophy render him more fit than any one else to translate and edit these learned chapters upon the redoubtable society, as penned by an erudite professor of theology at Munich, M. Huber.

I am very anxious to get this important publication well known all over France. You can be of great help in this useful propaganda : you must read these volumes and then write about them ; in this way you will often be able to quote carefully chosen extracts. In short, I trust in your old and tried friendship, and I cordially press your hand.

L. GAMBETTA.

PARIS, November 16, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have presumed too much upon my liberty : the municipal elections in Paris, the most complicated piece of business at which a politician was ever condemned to slave, prevent me leaving Paris even for twenty-four hours. So I shall be much obliged to you if you will postpone my visit, and tell our friends how

much I regret this delay; tell them at the same time that I solemnly promise to come and see them as soon as I have a minute free.

Sincerely yours, L. GAMBETTA.

Wednesday, February 3, 1875.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Allow me to tell you how surprised I was to see that you had misunderstood the very politic and efficacious conduct of the Left, and especially of the Extreme Left, in the debate on the Constitution. Be well assured that we are not going to make any constitutions; we are fighting all sorts and conditions of monarchists; we must, before all things, establish a legal and exclusive State with republican principles. We must face the coming elections with all the liberty and moral courage which will assure the triumph of democracy. In short, we must conquer first; we will then philosophise.

You guess the rest; I have no need to say anything more to you. I beg you to follow us; I count upon you. Put a stop to the erroneous and unjust letters which you have lately received from Paris.

Very sincerely yours,
LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, January 1, 1876.

MY DEAR FATHER, MY DEAR MAMA,—The worst part of the business is over at last; the Assembly has just broken up and set us at liberty. I shall be able to enjoy a few minutes of the rest of which I have never before been so long deprived, and of which I have never had greater need. I have led a terrible life for the last

six months. And this implacable need of rest must be my excuse if people grumble at my numerous acts of carelessness. I know you too well to fear that you would ever think of blaming me. You must never mistrust me.

I did not want to leave off any of my good habits. I wish you, as always, a happy new year. I hope that it will bring happiness to all of us. I kiss you both as I love you—that is to say, passionately. Kiss also my Benedetta and my Léon for me.

However, I hope in a few days to come in person to press you all to my heart and bring my new year's gifts to the mother and the child. . . .

PARIS, *April 25, 1876.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—You must think with reason that I very seldom send you news of myself. Alas! I am overwhelmed with work; the task is killing me. I have not got a minute to myself: the two newspapers, my visits, the Budget, foreign politics, the elections—the devil take it all! the burden is too heavy for me. You must pity me and not be angry with me.

And yet I am always thinking of you, of my poor aunt, whose absence is a source of great grief to me. I feel that I shall never again see her as she used to be, so cheerful, so intelligent, and so kind. The best part of my youth was spent with her; her departure has made a gap in my life which nothing can fill. I need not beg you to take great care of her; your charming letters tell me quite enough to let me see that you are lavishing care and attention upon her. If anything could increase my gratitude for all your kindness, it is the admirable affection which you bestow upon her. Kiss her heartily



Mlle JENNY MASSABIE,
Gambetta's Aunt

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for me, as well as my mother and my three children; for I am already so old that I might well call Léon, Benedetta, and Alexandre* my children.

I have been unable to hear anything of the stolen goods; I cannot even find a trace of them. I am working hard in order to make up for this loss, which has caused me more annoyance than all the others put together! I love you and embrace you all.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

VILLA BRUYÈRES (*c/o of Mme. Juliette Adam*), GOLFE-JUAN.

January 2, 1877.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have left Paris in search of a little rest and also a little liberty. You will have guessed that the last few months have tried me terribly. I am giving myself a week's peace; I shall be able to profit by it and to finish the work which importunate visitors have hitherto prevented me finishing in Paris.

I will come and see you and kiss you all Thursday, but I must leave you again that same evening; I shall then return to Nice before my departure. You must prepare my aunt for my visit; I am very anxious concerning the consequences of this painful interview. . . .

PARIS, *April 20, 1877.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am really worn out with anxiety and hard work. That is the real reason of my long silence. I often wonder when I shall be able to set everything in order. I am always coming across some stupid muddle bequeathed to me by my predecessor. I have still a whole month's work before I shall be

* Alexandre Lérís, his sister's second husband.

able exactly to know the extent of my worries. You must excuse me and be quite certain that my heart is not at fault. You know me well enough to know, however, that nothing can lessen my courage, and that I shall soon manage to extricate myself. . . .

We have now reached one of the most important epochs in Gambetta's life: the affair of May 16, 1877, and the *coup d'État* of the President of the Republic, Marshal MacMahon. On that occasion the tribune once again became the "Dictator," the redoubtable leader of the great Republican struggles. Washburne said of him:—

"I have never seen his equal as an orator; but never did I see him look so grand as on the day when he was called to defend the Republic, after Marshal MacMahon had dismissed his Republican Ministry in order to replace it by an ostensibly Monarchical Ministry. That day Paris was in an uproar. That very evening I met most of the leaders of the Republican party at M. Thiers' house: they were all indignant. I can still hear the tone of voice in which M. Thiers cried: 'It is a veritable *coup d'État*!'

"We knew that Gambetta was to speak on the morrow, and a great number of people went to Versailles, where the *Assemblée* was sitting. I arrived there early in order to secure a good place. Never did an orator have a more brilliant and a more sympathetic audience than the Great Patriot had that day. He surpassed all our expectations. It was a great event in his career as an orator. I have heard all the best orators of my own country since 1840, as well as some of the most celebrated in England and France, but I have never been so deeply

impressed as I was by the speech which Gambetta uttered on that occasion. I do not believe that Mirabeau, during the early days of the *Constituante*, that Danton, when he thundered forth his harangues at the *Club des Jacobins*, that Vergniaud, when he bewitched the *Convention*, ever spoke with such eloquence."

*To Marcellin Pellet.**

PARIS, May 30, 1877.

MY DEAR MARCELLIN,—I thank you for the trouble which you have taken in order to give me an account of your district. Although I receive the same good news from all quarters, I never get tired of hearing pleasant truths. This good omen surely means that we shall win a brilliant victory, which will put the finishing touch to our popularity. Things have taken rather a strange turn since your departure. The rift has spread to the very heart of the Cabinet; and certain newsmongers have gone so far as to propagate a report that between now and June 15th we may witness another unexpected event which will again send the President into the background and bring the Left-Centre to the fore. I will not believe such enormities; I will stick to what is certain. Now, one thing is certain, and that is the stupidity, the incapacity of these lovers of random *coups d'État*. They have already positively renounced all idea of a second prorogation. The dissolution itself is receding into the background; people are less keen to botch matters. The refusal of the Senate to separate, in its own interest and in that of the Marshal, is beginning to reconcile most people. A certain party is anxious to save the Marshal and to

* The youngest deputy of the 363, on May 16th.

avoid the resignation as well as the appeal to the nation. For my part, the more our adversaries show the white feather, the more I feel inclined to worry them. We must take advantage of their blunders, push on towards the dissolution, and force one and all to bow before the nation's final verdict. That is the only way to turn over a new leaf, make a clean sweep of everything, and put a new shirt on France, which people, ever since September 4th, have obstinately allowed to wear its old linen, all spotted and stained with the blood and dirt of former Governments.

So it is quite understood that at present we must side with no party in particular—at least, not openly. Let us leave our enemies to get hopelessly involved; let us blow up all their bridges behind them, so that they may not be able to retreat: we shall always have time to unmask our batteries.

And then we must trust completely in each other. I can answer for it that there is nothing to be feared in the way of an unexpected blow. Let us keep our friends and our adversaries in order, and then we shall be able to get through an immense amount of work within the next three months. We shall not only do away with the three years which still remain to the *Septennat*, but we shall gain ten years for Republican democracy at home and abroad.

In short, everything is going on very well. I want the nation's wishes to be consulted immediately. What I fear most is that it will beat a retreat and that it will do something which will plunge us back into the swamps and quagmires into which Ricard and Simon had led us. And so I embrace you.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

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PARIS, *July 27, 1877.*

MY DEAR MAMA,—This morning I received your letter in which you tell me that you are coming to pay me a visit on Sunday next: I have just sent you my reply by telegraph. If you had given me notice beforehand, I would have told you that I could not possibly receive you here, and that for many reasons: first, because I am just now too busy, much too busy, with the elections; secondly, because I have not got the smallest room or bed to give you.

Since the newspaper was placed on a new footing, the editors of the two papers have taken possession of the rooms which I had meant to give my aunt: the offices have been installed there. All my aunt's bedding has just been sent to Nice. I only have *one bedroom* and a study for my own use; François has his own room in the attics. So you see that I cannot possibly take you in, and it grieves me deeply to have to tell you so. So you must be patient and wait for better days, and then, when I have a home of my own, I shall be delighted to have you as my first visitor; until then, you must do as I do: resign yourself

PARIS, *August 19, 1877.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Mama started yesterday for Cahors in very good health after a stay in Paris of three weeks, which, I think, she thoroughly enjoyed. Unfortunately I was unable, owing to the fearful amount of work which I have to get through and which tires me more and more, to devote much time to her; but I hope in a few months to reap splendid results from my labours—results which will free us from these continual crises which paralyse the country's interests and threaten its very existence.

My mother is bringing two volumes which I am send-

ing to Léon as a reward for having obtained a fine prize for history ; this news gave me the greatest satisfaction. We must congratulate him again and again and encourage him in every way to work. . . .

PARIS, *November 8, 1877.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Although you must find my long silence disagreeable and unaccountable, I still rely upon your kindness to believe that I am overwhelmed by work. You must forgive me on account of my terrible fate

Things look bad here ; but everything will come right in the end, thanks to the firmness and resolution of the country and its representatives. We have still three critical weeks to get through, and then everything will be settled. . . . We must trust and be prudent ! . . .

PARIS, *March 18, 1878.*

MY DEAR AND KIND FATHER,—I am sending my numerous excuses and my no less numerous reasons for this involuntary delay in writing to you. To-day, however, as it is your birthday, I cannot break the old habit of forty years' standing and not send you my very best love. So I kiss you on both cheeks and beg you to believe that your son is heartily thankful, in the midst of his various and numerous worries, to be able to snatch a moment of liberty from the mad whirlpool of life in which to think of his old father and to assure him of his gratitude and his love for all his kind deeds in the past, and to beg him to bear bravely all present trials. Kiss every one for me ; take great care of my poor aunt, to whom Dr. Fieuzal will give all the appliances which she requires. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for

your kindness to her, and I enclose a thousand-franc note for you to spend as you like. . . .

We quote the following words from Dr. Cayla's *Souvenirs* :—

“In 1878, while on a visit to M. Fallières at Nérac, the conversation turned upon the wonderful tribune. M. Fallières seemed delighted with some little anecdotes which I had just related to him concerning Gambetta. We had reached his house in the well-known street (I think I can still see the two beautiful maypoles which had been planted there—two majestic pines)—I was just going away when M. Fallières detained me :

“‘That reminds me of something!’ cried he. ‘One day there had been a very tumultuous *séance* at the palace at Versailles; night had fallen and everyone was tired. Gambetta ascended the rostrum; Sénard and I were both sitting on an upper bench. His animated and splendid burst of eloquence soon stirred up the sleepy audience. We listened, not charmed but positively petrified by his masterful speech! . . . And Sénard, taking me by the arm, whispered: “Just look! . . . ’tis Mirabeau himself!” That was all! the illustrious advocate was probably unable to utter another word.’”

To Alexandre Lérès.

HOTEL DE LA LIGURIE, TURIN, April 5, 1878.

MY DEAR ALEXANDRE,—I am starting for the north of Italy, and from there I know not where; but I propose to touch at Venice. I beg you to fasten up all the letters and telegrams which have come for me in a packet and to send them to Venice, *poste restante*, addressed to M. François Roblin.*

* His valet.

I will then let you know where you are to send my other letters.

Vienne, *April 19, 1878.*

MY DEAR ALEXANDRE,—I have received all your papers quite safely and I am very glad of it. I am starting in a few hours so that I may be nearer Paris. I beg you to send the rest of my letters and telegrams to the Chaussée d'Antin, where I shall be in a few days. . . .

As soon as I am back again, I will see the chief of the Treasury and settle as to your new position. I shall be very glad to hear all you can tell me concerning the tomb of my dear dead one.* I will reply as soon as I have seen and examined the design.

I am pretty well; the weather has been splendid. No one has recognised me, and I am coming back refreshed and ready to begin the struggle again. I kiss you all.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

August 11, 1878.

. . . I am doing my best to recruit my strength, which has been much shaken by many struggles. I have taken refuge in the country; but I am near at hand, near enough to Paris to come from time to time to give a look round and to attend to my business. I am beginning to feel a little better, but I am still in great need of rest—and especially silence. . . .

January 1, 1879.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I send you five hundred francs, part of which you must devote to the expenses incurred by the mausoleum.† You can give fifty francs to

* Jenny Massabie, his aunt Tata, who died at Nice, 1877.

† The mausoleum erected over his aunt's grave.

Bendetta and twenty francs to Léon, besides one hundred francs to my mama and a louis to Miette. You may spend the rest as you please. . . .

The year is beginning well; the weather is delightful, and I feel as strong as I did fifteen years ago. However, I shall soon need all my strength; for I can foresee that my task will be increased, and I am not altogether without apprehension as to the difficulties which await me in the future. But enough! it is not the first time that this has happened, and so far we have pulled through all right!

Léon has written me a pretty letter, for which I thank him; I can see that he has been working; but I am not content with the fact that he is seventh out of thirty-seven: he must be one of the three first. We must encourage and reward him. . . .

Chambre des Députés

Présidence.

PARIS, *February 12, 1879.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I thank you for your kind letters. I have not quite settled down, and I foresee that this new post will cause me much anxiety and hard work. I hope with perseverance to get through all right, but it will not be without great sacrifices.

PARIS, *April 4, 1879.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I hasten to reply to your letter and to thank you for your kind words and affectionate thought of my dear aunt, whom I can never forget. I beg you always to keep her last resting-place in good order and nicely decorated with flowers.

As to the multifarious letters of introduction which you sent me—five in eight days!—let me tell you that they are too numerous and that you allow people to

impose upon you much too easily. I cannot and must not do anything in the matter. . . .

August 20, 1879.

MY DEAR FATHER,—At last I am free and able to take a holiday. I avail myself of my liberty in order to repair my poor devil of a body, which is much fatigued by this trying session. Large doses of exercise, sleep, rest, and fresh air will soon set me up again. I thank you for your beautiful present of lemons; I have already eaten a fearful quantity.

PARIS, January 3, 1880.

MY DEAR FATHER,—After many tribulations and misfortunes I have managed to pull through. But I am thoroughly worn out in mind and body. My bronchitis has returned worse than ever and I am forced to stay in one room.

I cannot possibly come and see you this year; it is too cold and my holidays are too short.

I hope that as soon as it is a little warmer you will be able to come and see me yourself; I will send you the money for the journey.

Meanwhile take care of yourself, keep well; kiss mama, and believe me always your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, March 17, 1880.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I know that it is very wrong of me not to write more frequently to you; but I am the slave of duty and of the terrible laws which govern my life, alas! always at the mercy of unexpected events.

Luckily there are dates and occasions which serve as resting-places along the high-road of life when I can recover my liberty for a few minutes. March 19th is

one of those dates, a breathing-time when I can turn towards you and send you my best love and assure you of my unalterable affection.

I am not very well ; I have been working too hard and I have tired myself too much this winter. I am paying my yearly tribute to my bronchitis, which is worse than usual. I shall be able to rest in a few days. I will send you news of myself from my resting-place. . . .

PARIS, *April 5, 1880.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—Your kind letter touched me to the heart, and I want to thank you for it at once. I am not suffering quite so much now that I am able to rest a little ; but I am not yet satisfied with myself. However, I hope to be quite well and able to resume my labours before the session opens, for I am convinced that I shall have greater need of strength than ever before.

What you tell me about mama has grieved me deeply ; I love to think that spring and change of scene will restore the good-humour and the health which she has hitherto enjoyed.

I enclose a note for five hundred francs so that you may be able to buy some little comforts for her and yourself.

PARIS, *April 13, 1880.*

DEAR FATHER,—I am getting better and better, and I am quite sure that I shall be wound up again and ready for the re-opening of the session.

I send one hundred francs for the new road to Varase ; but if you think I ought to do the same for *Celle*, I am quite ready to do so. . . .

March 18, 1881.

MY DEAR FATHER,—You know that it would grieve me deeply to neglect the dear custom of wishing you a happy

birthday every spring. It consoles me amid the ever-increasing torments of my life to be able to do so. I do not complain, however; but I am more and more engrossed, monopolised by business, and I can see no chance of peace for me, no, not even for a few days.

I hope that you are all living happy, peaceful lives far away from the madding crowd. Be assured that, notwithstanding my long and involuntary silence, I love you all heartily. I kiss you, dear father, and I wish you as happy a birthday as you had thirty years ago.

Your son, LÉON GAMBETTA.

May 14, 1881.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I was delighted to receive your portrait painted by M. Robert: it is simply admirable, and I am the happiest of sons to have my father's dear picture on my writing-table.

I beg you to come to Cahors for the 25th. You must stay at the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, where I myself shall arrive on the 25th.

PARIS, *August 14, 1881.*

DEAR M. CACAULT,—I can only reply to your application in the most categorical manner; I never recommended any one—neither M. de Soubeyran nor any one else—to negotiate and to sign any loans for the State. You can use this as a contradiction if, as you say, you need it. Very sincerely yours,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

August 17, 1881.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have written nothing to you for a very long time; but you must have seen in the newspapers to what a terrible task I have been yoked since my visit

to Cahors. And yet, notwithstanding all this, I am in better health and spirits and stronger than I have ever been. I am confident that I shall soon confound all my enemies, and that I shall at last be able to take a few weeks' rest. . . .

Présidence du Conseil.

PARIS, *November 17, 1881.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—At last, after much trouble and many disappointments, I find a minute in which to embrace you and to ask how you are. I have been forced—the term is not too strong—to take the heavy burden upon my own shoulders.* I shall do my duty, thoroughly, completely, to the very end; and, provided that I keep my health, I hope by dint of plodding to be able to accomplish my task. I do not count the difficulties and the dangers: they are innumerable. I trust in fate and in my devotion to the commonwealth. I must leave the rest to the mercy of the gods, if there are any. I embrace you all. Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *January 1, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—At last I find time to send you, as I have done every year hitherto, two lines of my handwriting. I trace these words in order to tell you that I pray that I may be able to keep you two with me as long as possible. From time to time I throw a glance athwart the terrible life which I am now leading towards my home, and I dream that some day I shall be able to enjoy a well-earned rest, and still have round me my dear old parents, who, less weary and worn than I, will be able to give me all the consolation and care which they never

* The presidency of the *Conseil*.

denied me in my youth. I embrace you both a thousand thousand times, and remain for life the son who loves you.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Sunday, February 19, 1882.

MY DEAR FATHER,—Here I am back again, alas! much sooner than I wished, from that beautiful land of Italy, and already partly settled in the rue Saint-Didier.* I thank you, as well as the rest of the family, for your kind welcome. I felt truly thankful to find you all so cheerful and in good health. Were it not for the annoying crowd of visitors, I should still be with you; but the devil who, in spite of my efforts to free myself from his clutches, directs my life, was against it. No one would believe how difficult it is for me to get a day of real rest and silence. I was hunted away from every turn of the Corniche until I got to Genoa. However, the journey was delightful. I must not forget to tell you that General Pescetto came to the station of Celle-Ligure in order to shake my hand, to chat for a few minutes, and to ask after my health.

At Genoa I also met a young professor from Sestri named David Gambetta, a very affable and intelligent fellow, whose acquaintance I was delighted to make. He is to go and see you at Nice.

* Alfred Barbou, after describing the noble downfall of Gambetta, who voluntarily descended from his high position after scarcely three months' office, wrote: "He retired with dignity, resigned his position with all the simplicity with which he had accepted it, and went to live at No. 57, rue Saint-Didier, close to Victor Hugo's house. The Bonapartists, who had accused him of bathing in the Duc de Morny's silver bath while at the Palais Bourbon, now reproached him for having bought, with the proceeds of his thefts, a magnificent *hôtel*. This *hôtel* was a little two-storied house, for which he paid a rental of about three thousand francs (£120).



Photo. Carjat

GAMBETTA in 1882

I can say nothing about politics just now ; they are suffering from an attack of putrid fever. I shall wait for it to pass. *A bientôt!* I embrace you all.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

La République Française.

53, rue de la Chaussée d'Antin.

Cabinet du directeur politique.

PARIS, *March* 17, 1882.

MY DEAR FATHER,—A sweet feeling of emotion stirs my heart as each year goes by and brings me to the eve of another family *fête*, at which I always seem to be present in person, although my terrible anxieties have often prevented me from doing so. Yes, dear father, I wish you from the bottom of my heart, with the same effusion and the same filial love as of yore, a happy birthday such as you used to enjoy when I was a child. We have known bad years, and yet not one was so bad that it did not hold one happy day: the birthday of the beloved father, who, stronger than all of us put together, will remain with us for many a long year to make us happy and enjoy our affection.

The memory of my kind aunt comes back to me as I evoke the past ; I gladly remember her while assuring you of my loving gratitude and of my unchangeable affection. Always your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

April 1, 1882.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am sending a very tardy reply to your kind letter ; but the demon of hard work has seized upon me body and soul, and I am just as unable to snatch a minute's leisure as heretofore.

Luckily M. Camille Depret, who was highly delighted

with the welcome which you accorded to him, was able to give me good news of you. That reminds me that you asked for his address; here it is: C. Depret, 26, rue Jacob, Paris.

I love to think that you no longer feel any bad effects of your accident. It is a warning to you to be more careful in future, and not always to waste your strength as if you were still a young man. We so long to keep you with us for another century, that we really may be allowed to change our relationship and to lecture you from time to time. . . .

PARIS, *April 13, 1882.*

I avail myself of the departure of my friend, Paul Detot, to send you good news of myself. You know my favourite motto: Patience brings all things about. I am waiting patiently.

I am delighted to hear that you have quite recovered from your accident, and, while congratulating you, I must repeat my request that you will behave with more prudence and less like a young man. M. Depret was very grateful for your kind attentions and your charming letter; he is, and ever will be, a true friend, which, as times go, is a valuable possession. . . .

To Marcellin Pellet.

PARIS, *June 6, 1882.*

. . . I cannot tell you how I have been overwhelmed by worries and anxieties of every description for the last two months. Luckily I am pretty tough, as you say, and I shall be able to extricate myself from this horrible muddle. . . .

Les Jardies, where Gambetta was to die that very year, was not the sumptuous domain which his adver-

saries imagined it to be. It was bought for the sum of one hundred thousand francs on January 20, 1882, by Depret for Gambetta, who agreed to pay for it within a year. It was Alexandre Lérís who, after Gambetta's death, in the name of the family, completed the purchase on June 4, 1883, and who, after having sold the adjoining grounds in order to lighten the death-duties, gave the house to Gambetta's friends that it might be converted into a sort of museum.

La République Française.

53 chaussée d'Antin.

Cabinet du directeur politique.

PARIS, *July 6, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have received your kind letters, for which I thank you. If I do not write more often to you, it is because I have no time to do so. Never, no, not even when I was at the head of affairs, have I been more overwhelmed with all kinds of work. I hope within the next few weeks to be able to send you a little present; I am working with that object in view, but I am very hard up just now. When mama is here, I shall try to put something into her purse; it is not my will which is at fault, but I have always been a bad hand at accounts, and I have sacrificed much to the exigencies and the thousand and one claims of public life; ingratitude and treachery have always been my reward. Never mind, I regret nothing, for I have always acted in the interests of my party; the day of reckoning will dawn sooner or later; if it only dawns after my death, I shall bear no ill-will and feel no spite. I trust in history; and when it is from history alone that one can hope for justice, slander and calumny pass over one's head without touching one; and then, though men may despise an honest man, the

knowledge that he is blameless affords him such exquisite pleasure that he can bear anything without flinching, provided that he reaches the goal.

I embrace you like a devoted son.

LIÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *July 11, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I went to see mama on receiving a letter from her announcing her arrival at Benedetta's house. I found her very tired after her journey; she had been seized with a fainting-fit, caused by giddiness, probably due to the jolting of the railway-carriage; but when I got there she was already better. She was so delighted to see us all together that she soon recovered her strength, and the doctors say that it is only a passing indisposition; the doctor who attends the family and the good Fieuzal, who lives near by, agree upon this point.

I have just left her sleeping peacefully; I shall go and see her very early to-morrow morning and I will let you know how she is. Knowing how anxious one always is when separated, and as we are so far away, I took upon myself to send you a telegram yesterday. I beg you to trust in me; I will take care of her as well as you could do, were you here; and so you need not worry yourself, dear father, about our good and excellent mama.

PARIS, *July 15, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I avail myself of Joseph Arnaud's departure for Italy and his visit to Nice in order to send you news of my dear mama.

As I have already written to you, the journey tired her terribly and brought on a nervous attack, which, however,

soon yielded to care and attention. Thanks to prompt remedies, she was able to pull through the first phases of the malady. She is still very weak to-day, but we have every reason to think that she will recover her strength little by little.

So you must not exaggerate the gravity of her condition, notwithstanding her recent ill-health and her age, which always complicates matters when the patient is no longer young.

As soon as she is really better, and when the doctors let me know their opinion upon the subject, I will bring her back to Nice myself, to you whom she ought never to have left in this hot weather and in the state of nervous tremor from which she has been suffering for some time.

July 19, 1882.

MY DEAR FATHER,—I feel that I ought to tell you exactly how our dear mama is going on. Although we have no cause to fear a fatal issue to her illness, we must remember that the slightest thing at her age, and with her feeble constitution, may prove fatal. The fever increases steadily; her pulse, which has always been rather feeble, is 100; her head is very weak and her mind wanders at times; the brain is evidently congested; we placed an ice-bag on her head last night in order to check the inflammation. The invalid is extremely susceptible to the weather, which is very changeable just now, sometimes very heavy, at other times quite cold. We are taking the greatest care and precaution to prevent a relapse; but I am very anxious, and I think it necessary to warn you. You are brave, cool-headed, and philosophical, so I ought to tell you the truth. I consider it my duty to do so, for I am sure that you can

bear to hear all the sad details of her illness, for are we not all subjected to illness at some time or other?

I will write to you every day; trust in me. Do not worry yourself because you are not with her. I am watching over her, and I can assure you that nothing shall be spared in order to prolong the last days of a life which is so precious to us all.*

* Gambetta's mother died on the morrow. Emmanuel Arène wrote, January 1, 1884:—

"The clearest and the saddest of all the many memories which fill my brain is the memory of Gambetta at his mother's death-bed (whither he had hurried after escaping from the Chamber, where he had just delivered one of his most admirable speeches), in that little house at Saint-Mandé where the poor, brave woman was dying. What more poignant tragedy can there be than this scene? It was just at the moment when the Egyptian question was being most hotly discussed—that unlucky question which he had so much at heart, and which certainly shortened his life. His mother had come up to Paris, and on her arrival had been struck down by a paralytic stroke. Gambetta, wild with sorrow, went twice a day, morning and evening, to sit by her side; by day his duty kept him at the Chamber; he sat there on his bench, following like a good patriot and Frenchman, the grave discussions, absorbed nevertheless by his private sorrow, fearing every moment some fatal news, and haunted by the vision of that dear good old lady who, at the other end of Paris—that Paris re-echoing with her son's name—was slowly dying, holding on to life with all her strength, as if she understood that he must go on speaking, and reproached herself—poor, excellent creature, the eternally devoted mother—for thus troubling him and causing him such cruel pain!

"Her death came late enough to enable Gambetta, mastering his agony and quelling his bleeding heart, to mount to the rostrum and pronounce his admirable speech on Egypt—his last speech, which will always seem like an exquisite swan-song, brilliant and magnificent! When he had finished, while the applause was still continuing, I can see him jumping into the carriage and hurrying off to Saint-Mandé. We accompanied him together with Etienne; we arrived together, and I shall never cease to see the man who had just electrified the Chamber, the marvellous orator whose ardent voice still re-echoed among the arches of the Palais-Bourbon, the great politician whose

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Goodbye until to-morrow, dear father. Be brave, and believe me your devoted son, who loves you dearly, for you are the best of fathers. I embrace you.

LÉON GAMBETTA.

PARIS, *July 29, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I received your kind letter this morning, and I hasten to reply to it. For the first time since my return home, I have been able to find a moment's leisure. It is late; we have just left the Chamber, where we have at last done justice, with a tremendous majority, to X. The Cabinet pretended to be overcome with modesty for a minute and then . . . gave up the ghost!

I do not know what will come of it all; but anything is better than to have X. at the head of affairs. . . . We shall try to live on good terms with those who are now coming to the fore and to weld the Republican party together.

I much regret that I cannot be with you, and never has the yoke of politics weighed more heavily upon me than it does now. Luckily my good sister is near you, and you are so brave that I fully expect to see you surmount your grief. Time is flying and we shall soon meet again.

I kiss you on both cheeks. Your son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

name, even at that hour, was in everybody's mouth, whose speeches were telegraphed to the very ends of the earth—I shall always see him by that little iron bedstead, far away from all the clamours aroused by his speech, sobbing like a child, trying to warm in his own hot hands his mother's hands already cold, and with that same voice so powerful only a few moments ago, now so gentle, so piteously calling, 'Mama! mama!' the poor, beloved old lady who could no longer hear him!"

PARIS, *August 15, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I am ready punctually to follow your itinerary; and no matter which day you fix for a *rendez-vous* at the good M. Defaudon's house, I shall be there. Let me hear by return of post what you want me to send you for your journey from Nice to Lyons. I have not quite recovered from my cold: the weather here is execrable: windy, cold, rainy; no one ever saw such a summer; one would think that the weather, like everything else, was going to the dogs, that words had changed their meanings and that summer was only another term for winter.

I can see that your health is good and that your courage and your philosophical firmness of character are helping you to bear the cruel loss which we have just experienced.

At least we have the consolation to think that our dear mama's end was as calm as possible, and that she departed this life without any pain, as if she had just fallen asleep after having finished her task. This thought consoles me, and I hope that my account of our mother's absolutely peaceful transition to another world will console you also.

We feel as if she were still with us. We are glad to be able to speak of her, and our pleasure is spoilt by no bitter feelings. How truly you say: "Suppose we were to see her enter the room again!"

Come, be brave, dear father. *A bientôt!*

I embrace you, together with my dear Benedetta, whom I love so dearly. Your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

To Eugène Etienne.

PARIS, September 25, 1882.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I received your telegram and your letter in Switzerland, from which country I have been driven by rain and snow, and it is from Paris that I send you my hearty congratulations upon your escape from the horrible danger to which you were exposed in the Gulf of Valence.* It is only when we have trembled in the very depths of our soul for the lives of our friends that we realise how dear they are to us; I can assure you that I have experienced this sensation and that I love you very dearly. You are now in the middle of your African campaign. Do not overtire yourself. Talk sensibly to your constituents. Tell them to trust in the inevitable destiny of the Republic, which we are going to strengthen on its foundations and to cover with glory, notwithstanding the idiotic brawling of an incapable minority which would be unable to give vent to its spite had we not spent ten years in trying to teach it how to make itself heard.

All this turmoil, all these presumptuous chatterboxes, will be silenced when once the nation, with its habitual good sense, gets the upper hand. Then the real Republican France will have its day and the people will only remember benefits received. You are one of those upon whom France (and I too) has a right to depend: this twofold hope does me good and helps me to bear an absence which would grieve me were it caused by anything else than the good of the Republic.

Meanwhile, *à bientôt*, and believe me ever your sincere friend,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

* The deputy for Oran had nearly been shipwrecked.

PS.—I gave your kind regards to Mme. Arnaud, who was much touched and spoke very kindly of you. I fancy you are a great favourite in that quarter.

Have you seen Colonel Négrier?

PARIS, *October 30, 1882.*

MY DEAR FATHER,—I have just returned from Mme. Arnaud's country house in the Yonne. I have got a slight cold, but my mind and body are both refreshed and ready to resume the parliamentary harness. My friends begged me to give you their love; they wish you good health and envy you the climate in which you live. . . .

I beg you to say nothing concerning my marriage.* You must have spoken to some one on the matter, for the Agence Havas received a telegram from Nice announcing my marriage. I have had the telegram suppressed; but they are evidently well informed there. I cannot understand how this comes about, for you are the only person to whom I mentioned the matter.

I am doing my best to persuade my friend to make up her mind, and I really think that I have done some good, thanks to my account of your joy on learning such a piece of news; but I have not quite conquered her scruples and her opposition, so we must be discreet and avoid all publicity.

Believe me, I shall not be really happy until I can tell you that I have obtained her consent: you shall be the first person to whom I shall make it my duty to announce the glad tidings. While awaiting the happy day, which I am doing my very best to hasten, write to me as often

* His marriage with Mme. Léonie Léon, whose wish to live in retirement he believed he had at last conquered.

as you can ; your kind letters, so full of wisdom and refined feelings, do me the greatest good. If I do not always reply immediately, do not be discouraged, but write again and again. Take care of your health and love me as I love you. I embrace you. Your devoted son,

LÉON GAMBETTA.

Five months after his mother's death Gambetta, too, passed into the Silent Land.

VII

THE DEATH OF GAMBETTA

AFTER those days of bitterness and despondency—of which, in order to spare the feelings of certain highly esteemed personages who are still alive, we have only been able to give a brief account—Léon Gambetta retired more or less into private life. He began to spend more and more of his time with the admirable companion of a life which was fast fading away. And she, before whom the great patriot's most faithful friends knelt in respect, must here appear, still veiled in mystery as she herself had wished to live, but divested of all the cruel and fanciful legends with which spiteful people vainly endeavoured to sully her fair name.

Mme. Léon was the daughter of a colonel in the French army; naturally of an independent disposition, endowed with a strong will which shone in her large eyes, the small, delicate young woman met Gambetta for the first time in September, 1868. After the war she attached herself, so to speak, to the tribune and endeavoured to meet him as often as possible. In the railway carriage in which Gambetta travelled to and fro from Versailles with his friends, he often remarked a lady seated in front of him who listened in silence to every word,

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her great eyes fixed upon him. He soon felt attracted by this mysterious lady's strange charm.

Although he was puzzled and somewhat uneasy—for he knew that his tenacious adversaries were already spying upon his actions and watching all his movements—Léon Gambetta commissioned two of his most intimate friends to discover the identity of this enigmatical female admirer whose silence had made such an impression upon him. The result of their inquiries was reassuring: Mme. Léonie Léon was free to act as she wished; she was now occupied in educating a young child; there was nothing to alarm the conquered hero.

A recently published volume of their letters* reveals their private life to us.

Just as their union was about to be legalised, on the very eve of the day appointed by Gambetta himself to announce the news, an absurd and insignificant accident led to a terrible tragedy.

On the morning of November 27, 1882, General Thoumas went to see Gambetta at Ville d'Avray. Their conversation finished, the tribune accompanied his old soldier friend to the garden gate.

The proprietor of Les Jardies, noticing that the path was not as clean as it ought to have been, loudly scolded the lazy gardener, whom he had often had occasion to reprimand and who of late had neglected his work. Exasperated by some impertinent reply, he gave his servant warning. . . .

But this scolding had left him nervous and irritable.

A gunsmith in Paris had just sent Gambetta a case

* *Le Cœur de Gambetta*, by Francis Laur: Paris 1906, translated by Violette M. Montagu under the title of: *The Heart of Gambetta*, John Lane, London, 1907.

containing two small revolvers, which at that time were rather a novelty, for they could be used and taken to pieces instantaneously. One of these arms was lying still loaded on his bureau. Gambetta seized it mechanically and, in his anger, handled it rather clumsily. The pressure caused the revolver to go off, and the bullet penetrated the palm of the tribune's hand and wounded him.

Among divers relics of the dead man can still be seen the case and the two arms sent by the gunsmith Claudin. One of the revolvers is still loaded; only one of the sockets of the oxidized barrel is empty. The weapon is exactly as it was when it fell from Gambetta's wounded hand.

We know what tremendous precautions were taken to keep Gambetta quiet; the strong, corpulent orator could not bear to be obliged to lie still. He had already had an attack of perityphlitis, or appendicitis, during his youth. While a student in Paris, he wrote to his father, July 6, 1857:—

“As for me, I have been suffering for the last four days from terrible pains in the stomach. You know that it is a sort of chronic malady with me. As each season comes round I have to pay tribute.”

This malady had left a certain weakness of the intestines, which he usually neglected, but which got worse as he grew stouter. When prescribing him absolute rest, no one thought of keeping his bowels open in order to avoid any fatal complications. Dr. Fieuzal, while speaking to one of Gambetta's near relatives concerning his last illness, said with tears in his eyes—

“We killed him in our efforts to cure him. We behaved just like a man who holds a priceless vase in

his hand and is so afraid of hurting it that he lets it fall and be smashed to atoms! If he had been a labouring man he would be still alive. What do you think we all forgot for ten days? We forgot to see that his motions were regular! . . . Not one of us ever inquired into that detail! . . . And his functions were suspended for eleven days! . . . Fatal inflammation ensued: a simple laxative would certainly have saved his life!"

Gambetta himself said to his sister during one of her visits to the sick man—

"Just think, Barnave" (this was his pet-name for Mme. L  ris), "they are afraid to doctor me. Ah! if I were a poor tramp in a hospital, I should soon be on my feet again."

The stoppage, which caused a perforation of the intestine, therefore had nothing to do with the little wound in his hand, which had closed and healed over. The other hand bore the indelible traces of the projectile, and certain persons were astonished to see the strange mark which became even more visible on the dead man's bloodless hand. This mark was all that remained of a demonstration made on Gambetta by his doctor, who, with his caustic pencil, had all unwittingly traced the progress of the tiny bullet.

Everything has been said concerning this tragic end; perhaps no one, except his own intimate friends, who are daily getting fewer and fewer, knows how his acquaintances heard of his decease.

Gambetta, on the morning of the day of his death, was so well, so cheerful, so delighted to think that he was recovering, and also so reassured by Dr. Lannelongue's bulletin, that the strict commands that he was not to be

allowed to see any of his friends had become intolerable to him. Eugène Etienne, who never left his bedside, told Fieuzal that the invalid was resting and could see no one, not even an old friend like him.

"Pooh!" cried Gambetta, "he wants to see me because he is going away; it is quite natural that he should wish to say goodbye: let him come up for a few minutes."

"Yes," consented Etienne, "but no longer."

Dr. Fieuzal entered. The sick man, reassured, beaming with joy, greeted him affectionately. It was nearly half-past five o'clock. . . . His old comrade of the Latin Quarter, seated at the foot of his bed, began a very lively conversation with Gambetta; the latter expressed his delight that this year, which had brought him so much ill-luck, would soon end. A new life would begin on the morrow. The great politician laughed heartily while he chatted with Fieuzal in the *patois* of Cahors, of which Etienne could not understand a single word, although he was obliged to laugh with the two lively friends.

Time was passing; it was nearly seven o'clock when Gambetta, feeling sleepy, expressed a wish to rest a little. Fieuzal, who seemed expecting this, hastily bade farewell to the sick man, and was just going to leave the room with Eugène Etienne, when the latter asked Gambetta—

"Don't you want any dinner?"

"Not just yet. I want to doze a little. I am very comfortable." And as the two friends were going out on tip-toe the invalid, already half asleep, called Etienne back.

"Are you going away without kissing me?" said he, with a smile.

"I did not want to wake you up," replied the young

deputy for Oran pressing his hand and kissing him on the forehead. "To-morrow morning I shall be the first to wish you a happy new year."

It had been arranged that he was to spend the evening in Paris with his family, as the "convalescent" was now supposed to be going on all right.

"Ah! my good friend!" cried Etienne after he had shut the door of the dressing-room behind Fieuzal, "how glad I am! He is going on all right now; he is safe!"

"Safe?" said the doctor sadly. "What are you talking about?"

"But haven't you read Lannelongue's bulletin? . . . and you yourself, you have just seen him?"

"Yes, and I have noticed something. . . . My poor friend, be brave: Gambetta is dying!"

The blow was so terrible, so unexpected, and the face of Dr. Fieuzal, who was at last able to give way to his grief, was so awe-struck, that Etienne fell senseless on the floor. Gambetta, suddenly awakened by the sound of some one falling, was heard crying out in alarm—

"What is the matter?"

"Nothing," answered Fieuzal, with a nervous laugh as he reopened the door; "it is only Etienne who has just slipped on your damned 'parquet, which is always much too highly polished, and he has landed on his back!"

"Good Heavens! has he hurt himself?"

"Oh! dear no; he's up again already. So try and sleep a little. Goodbye until to-morrow." . . .

The doctor closed the door again with such a heavy heart that he could not have uttered another word. Gambetta had just fallen into a deep sleep.

Fieuzal revived Etienne, explained to him his fearful,

his infallible diagnostic, and sent him, half mad with grief, to Paris, where he tried in vain to find Gambetta's intimate friends, who were all scattered about at different family festivities; he warned all those whom he could find. The *République Française* had just been issued and the offices were deserted. Etienne left word with his own people, and sent messages to all his friends; he then returned to Les Jardies shortly after nine o'clock. Spuller, who had been warned, had arrived a few minutes before. . . .

Gambetta was already at the point of death; he scarcely recognised them. By midnight he was dead.

When the sister of the great deceased arrived on the morning of January 1, 1883—she was then residing at Saint-Mandé and one of his intimate friends had gone in a carriage to fetch her after having left at his own house five bags containing the dead man's private papers—Mme. Léonie Léon was no longer by Gambetta's bedside.

She had gone to shut herself up all alone with her grief and her despair.

Mme. Lérís asked to be allowed to see her: she refused. Later, when the seals which had been affixed to the doors of the apartment in the rue Saint-Didier, Paris, and of Les Jardies, Ville d'Avray, were removed in the heirs' presence, Gambetta's sister found some packets of letters carefully arranged and tied with different coloured ribbons in a chest of drawers placed at the head of the dead man's bed. These letters represented the entire correspondence between Léon Gambetta and Léonie Léon. Mme. Lérís commissioned her husband to give them to the disconsolate friend. At the same time he asked, in the name of Gambetta's

father and sister, if the child whom newspaper reports during the tribune's lifetime had declared to be his son, was really the great patriot's child.

"Before replying, madame," said L  ris to her, "let me add that I have received instructions to give this child my brother-in-law's entire fortune if he is his son."

Mme. L  on replied that as he was not related to the tribune by any ties of blood, she could not accept this generous offer. Gambetta's friends then offered her an annuity, which the dead man's friend did not refuse. Later, on June 4, 1883, 60,000 francs were, by the executors' care, placed to her account at the *Caisse centrale populaire* (then situated in the Avenue de l'Op  ra), and she was informed of this transaction.

Scheurer-Kestner and the tribune's friends made a second deposit to the account of Mme. L  on. The annuity, which amounted to 6,000 francs, was paid to her until the day of her death.

Mme. L  on only broke silence on the day of the great man's funeral. She sent a telegram to Gambetta's father entreating him to let his son be buried in Paris.

So the tribune's friend was never allowed to suffer from lack of funds. Not only did Gambetta's family care for her, but his friends also watched over her, notwithstanding her half-savage desire to live the life of a recluse.

When she wished to prove that she had really been Gambetta's "morganatic wife" during the space of ten years, she had five copies made of his most characteristic letters and sent them to five of his most intimate friends, all of whom carefully returned the letters to her after they had read them. Later, the child, whom

she had educated and who died about twelve years ago, confided some of these private letters to a business friend; some of these letters have recently appeared in a magazine.*

This correspondence was not, as one might suppose, bequeathed to Gambetta's sister, who had acted so properly in sending them to the lonely woman at Auteuil.

For Léonie Léon died at Auteuil, November 14, 1906, at seven o'clock in the morning, after a very short illness. She was buried in the cemetery of Montparnasse in the family tomb beside her father, Colonel Léon. Three men followed her body to the cemetery: her lawyer, M. Tollu, M. Pallain, governor of the Banque de France, and Commander Jouinot-Gambetta, the son of Mme. Lérès.

The fourth mourner was missing; he would certainly have been there if he had not been absent from France for some days, and if he could have foreseen, before starting for Constantinople, that she would die so suddenly; this mourner was M. Eugène Etienne, the most faithful friend of the deceased woman and of Gambetta.

And so a romance which has often irritated the great patriot's friends is dispelled.

Mme. Léon was too religious to think of committing suicide; as to the report that she murdered Gambetta in a fit of jealousy, it is absurd. It is quite certain that Gambetta *wounded himself*. Immediately after the accident at Ville d'Avray, the hero of the National Defence hastened to prove that she was in no way responsible for his accident, although she was with him

* See page 347, note 1.

at the time; according to his express wish her name was to be omitted, even in the official version of the accident, during the poor woman's lifetime. Gambetta knew that the romance-loving populace, excited by calumnies on one hand and by insinuations on the other, is capable of inventing extremely painful untruths and very impudent lies. Another legend, which we must dispel, was that Gambetta died possessed of a *huge fortune*. This absurd report falls to pieces on the slightest investigation. Several devoted friends had thought that they could put in a safe place and out of his reach some of the money gained by the sale of his shares as founder of the *Petite République française*.

Mme. Adam, in the last volume which has been published of her memoirs, gives us the details of this profitable but well-nigh useless transaction which occupied the last days of Edmond Adam:

"Adam," she tells us (May, 1877), "wishes to devote all the strength which his illness has left him to righting the affairs of the *Petite République*. It is almost settled that Donon is to buy it. Adam has stipulated that the shareholders, the Dubochet, Kestner and Adam families, are to withdraw the sums which they invested in the newspaper and that Gambetta is to benefit by the superior value of the shares, the sale of the newspaper, and the interest which he had in its foundation, all of which he owed to his own talent. 'I wish,' Adam adds, 'to make him independent and to lift him out of this mediocrity in which he has hitherto lived so philosophically.'"

But Gambetta's indifference in money matters almost amounted to contempt. Heedless of the future, always open-handed, he who was master of France in 1870

(and since then) the "Dictator" of the National Defence, to whom the country owes its prosperity after having, as head of the War Office and Minister of the Interior, handled hundreds of millions almost without any supervision, lived a life of mediocrity, always short of cash even when he was receiving a large salary, for he immediately gave it away, and thus enraged his intimate friends, who, however, were powerless to put a stop to his liberality. When he died, he only left to his own family some scattered debts—Les Jardies, for instance, which had not been paid for—and the meagre fortune of a head clerk or a humble notary, notwithstanding Adam and Ruiz's financial efforts on his behalf.

We need not allude to the fierce calumny with which his opponents tried to sully his memory. One of his intimate friends told us:—

"I asked him one day why he did not reply to any of these accusations; he answered, shrugging his shoulders, 'What would you have me say? A newspaper once accused me of breaking my mother's heart (the poor woman was still alive then!) . . . What more can they say?'"

Gambetta died December 31, 1882, just before midnight: the year which had been most full of work for him, the year in which he, as a patriot, had perhaps experienced the greatest pain and certainly the greatest disappointments, was leading him away into the Silent Land. . . .

Gambetta's funeral was made the occasion for an outburst of popular sympathy; every patriot in France, no matter to what party he belonged, joined in mourning for his loss. Never before or since has any funeral ceremony been more imposing and more touching.

Gambetta, after the death of his dearly beloved Tata, had seriously thought about choosing Nice as his own resting-place; he had had a simple, unostentatious tomb erected according to his own ideas. When his father remonstrated with him for spending a large sum of money upon the purchase of the parcel of ground, the Great Patriot replied:

"It is indispensable: I have always wished that we, who love each other so dearly and whom life has thrust so far apart, should some day all be united in death."

While the stone was being cemented on the tomb of the mother who died at Saint-Mandé, the father and son once more renewed their mutual promise to come and sleep beside the two dear women.

Eugène Etienne, who attended the funeral of Gambetta's mother at Nice, relates a very significant anecdote concerning this event:

"When the coffin had been lowered into the vault, Gambetta came alone to the open grave, bent over it and whispered in a low, but very distinct voice: '*Au revoir, maman! . . . A bientôt!*' These words, which I never forgot, six months later were indelibly engraved on my memory. Had Gambetta, as it has often been said, received a mysterious warning that he would not survive this cruel year? . . ."

The town of Nice is granting Gambetta's last wish; he is now going to take his last rest between his two mothers and his father, facing the vast Latin sea along whose shores his father's ancestors for long centuries passed their lives in dreaming or in conquering. The old site was rapidly disappearing under an ever-increasing invasion of new tombs, so the town decided to transfer the vault, exactly as it was designed by

Gambetta, to the platform where the plank pyramid stands which was erected in 1883 and which was literally hidden under the piles of wreaths and flowers sent to Nice from all the corners of the earth.

. From there, between the almost cloudless Ligurian sky and the matchless sea, in the bosom of the glittering glacier-bound Alps, at the starting-point for the East of legend and adventure, the pilgrims to the tomb will see shining at their feet—and perhaps such was the wish of the hero of the National Defence when he chose his last resting-place—that delightful land, the last conquest of territorial France, which since the Terrible Year has become doubly French, for Nice is at once the cradle of Garibaldi and the grave of Gambetta.

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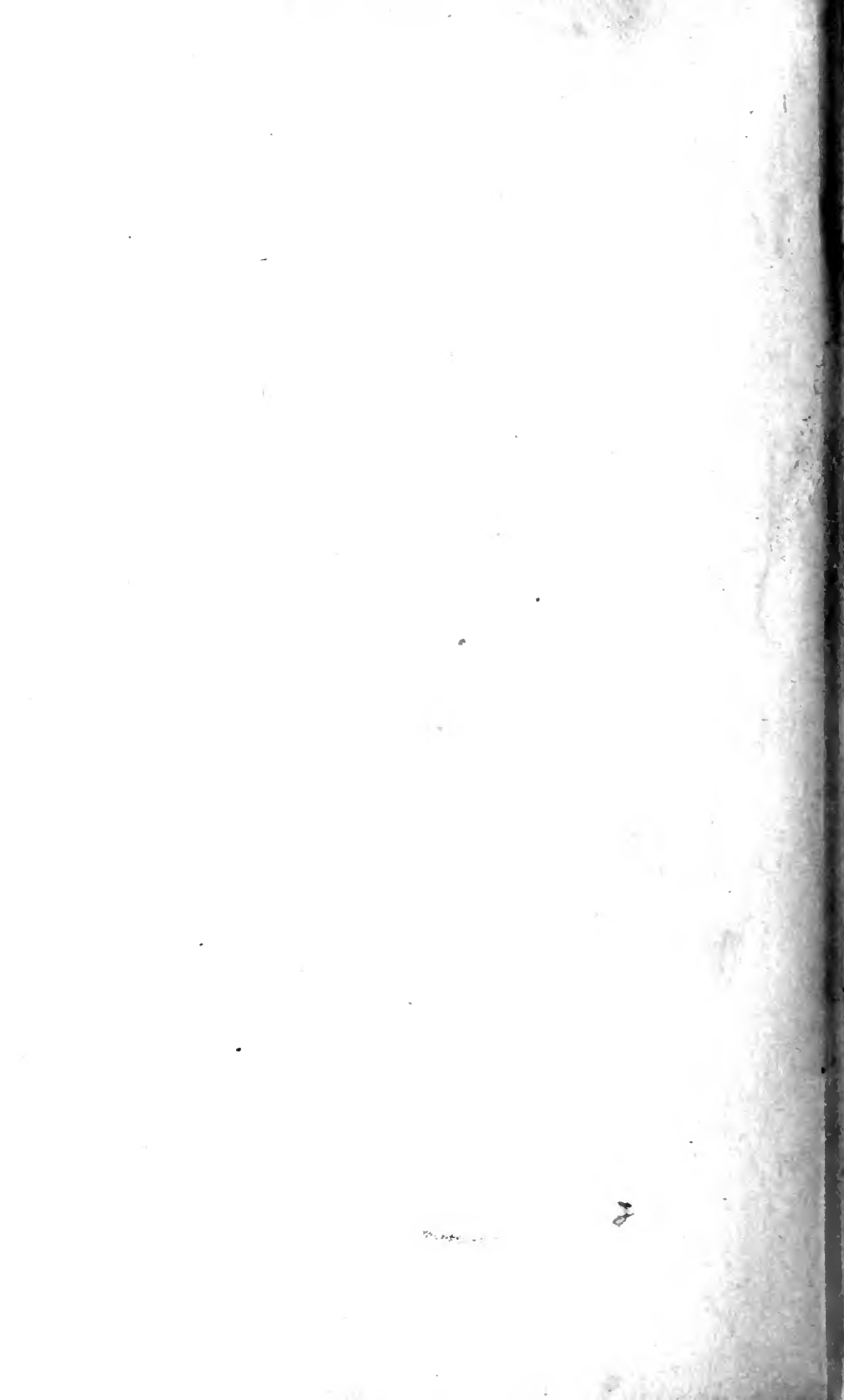
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